




INSIGHTS



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Fine Room



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Centenary College of Louisiana

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We wish to express our appreciation to Dean Bond Fleming, Mr. Jack Fiser, and Mr. Buzz Delaney for their aid and encouragement in the creation of this first edition of INSIGHTS. We are particularly indebted to Miss Becky Gould for her assistance in the typing and layout of the publication.

The majority of contributions for this issue of INSIGHTS has been poetry. Even though poetry is considered the crowning achievement of language, college writers seem to feel that poetry offers an "easier" means of expression than does prose. Since modern poetry is often hard to understand, many writers feel that the expression of any thought they might have, no matter how subjective or vaguely defined, may be passed off as poetry. Thus, an essential feature of a poem, that it communicate the writer's ideas to the reader, is often ignored. We feel that it would be wise for beginning writers to concentrate on gaining the ability to communicate clearly through various forms of prose, before proceeding to the more difficult form, poetry.

The Editors

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

PABLO is the pseudonym of Bob Blankenship, a junior English major from Wheaton, Illinois. Bob, the designer of our cover, is also a student of art. He plans to use his interests in art and creative writing to prepare him for a career in advertising.

PATT BYRD has been active in productions at the Marjorie Lyons Playhouse and participated in The Book of Job last summer. Patt is a junior English major from New Orleans.

STEVE CLINTON is a freshman from El Dorado, Ark., who plans a career in teaching and writing. He has previously had works published in his high school creative writing magazine.

DESSAGENE CRAWFORD, a senior from Jefferson, Tex., is secretary of Sigma Tau Delta at Centenary. She plans to attend graduate school in the field of linguistics.

DAVID EWING is a senior physics major from Bossier City. David spent last summer as a student assistant at the Atomic Energy Commission's Oak Ridge Laboratory.

(Continued on last page)

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Cline Room

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THE WALKER

Tonight the city is exquisite. The clean coldness of winter makes it a lovely place. People are funny when it is cold; scurrying about bent over in their warm coats. They never smile, but only breathe a sigh of relief by the warm heater inside. There is one little bald-headed man whom I see every night; he is so funny for he never wears a cap and the cold reddens his hairless top.

Well, that's enough about other people and things. Let me tell you about myself. - You see I am a strange person. Every night I leave my apartment at seven o'clock and walk about ten miles. By my route it takes about three hours to arrive at a tavern two blocks from my home. There I go inside and have one beer. I sip it very slowly and listen to the pianist play jazz, pop-songs, and honky-tonk. It is about ten-thirty right now. By eleven I will have drunk my beer and gone. It is rare that I ever miss going to bed by eleven-thirty.

You may ask what I do for a living. I really do everything you can name. My mother told me once that I am smart and ought to go to college. However, she is wrong. There is really quite a lot I don't understand. For instance one time I read a book called The Return of the Native. I couldn't understand a lot of it. So, here I am sweeping snow, washing windows, and emptying garbage. It is not such a bad life. It gives me a hollow, tired feeling I like very much.

Remember a moment ago I told you I was strange? Well, tonight I have been talking to myself. I know that everyone talks to himself at one time or another, but not as much as I. Tonight I talked about love. I have never been in love, but it is pleasant to think about it. I imagined myself as one who had just lost his lover and was trying to apologize to her for his shortcomings. It was nauseating to see the city so glorious tonight and speak of such things. The contrast was stimulating but painful.

That brings up another point. I have no conventional religion but rather worship pain. Most of the time I am quite depressed. Because of this, on nights like tonight, when I am happy, I enjoy myself more. However, there is one thing about this intense enjoyment I don't enjoy. It makes me very weak and I talk too much, like right now. You should feel very flattered.

Steve Clinton

THE WISH

Ten thousand stars shine
Like rare jewels against the night.
On the onyx sea
Are mirrored ten thousand points of cold fire.
The moon's full, unblinking eye,
Divides the sea with an aisle of light.
The wet sand glistens and shimmers
As the sea gently touches the shore.

A lone figure, I sit on the deserted beach,
Watching the embrace of the shore and the
 unchanging water.
For a long time I have waited.

The star pattern is broken
As a flaming brand of light crosses the sky,
Staining the heavens with a glowing trail.
The sea catches its image
And casts it back into the dark realm.
An instant --
And it is gone.
I wish for my beloved.

David Ewing

THIS THEN

This then when Winter comes:
 To stretch our arms to the golden Sun that gives
 us life but kills the Spring.
This then when Spring dies too:
 To praise the Fall and entreat the glorious and
 greener rebirth of God's great earth.
This then when Love fades too:
 To look ahead for Love again to bloom like the
 first red prophets of the greener Spring
That burst forth in bright brilliance when another
 season and bluebird come.

Bill Shaw

INDEPENDENCE

"I am a Man," I once affirmed,
"I'll stand alone and free.
No cosmic crutches do I need;
No human ties for me."

Without regret, I gave up God.
I took the step that day
While other weak and sniveling fools
In churches knelt to pray.

Next, all people I abjured.
The rupture now was made.
"Alone and free I stand on earth;
I am a man," I said.

To celebrate my freedom new
I did a pirouette.
"Free forever!" I exclaimed
And lit a cigarette.

Tommy Head

NIGHT

I am hungry
and night
lies thick
around me.
She touches
my face
with cold breath
and I freeze
afraid to move
lest the universe
crack
and all my dreams
come down
like dead
rose petals.

Roger Dick Johns

JUDGMENT

A SOMBER CREW OF TEN AND TWO
WITH FACES SHADOWED DUSKY BLUE
BEFORE ME SAT WITHOUT A BLINK
OR SMILE, OR JUST A FROWN. I THINK
I WAS FRIGHTENED MORE OF THEM, EACH
IN HIS PLACE JUST OUT OF THE REACH
OF THE WANING CANDLE LIGHT, THAN
OF THAT DARK MYSTERIOUS PLAN
THAT GAVE THIS COURT SOME EVIL RIGHT
TO SIT IN JUDGMENT THIS DARK NIGHT.
THEY MOVED THEIR LIPS YET I COULD HEAR
NOTHING AS THEY SPOKE. YET SO NEAR
WERE THEY I COULD SEE THAT THEIR EYES
HAD FIXED IN STARE UPON MY EYES
SO HARD A STARE THEY DID NOT BAT.
AND STILL I KNEW NOT WHY THEY SAT
IN JUDGMENT OVER ME. HOURS
I SPUN FROM MINUTES, AND TOWERS
I BUILT FROM SETTLING DUST. OH
HOW THE HOURS CREPT ON SO SLOW
BEFORE THEY STOOD EACH ONE IN TURN.
JUST THEN THE CANDLE CEASED TO BURN
AND FROM THE VOID A VOICE CAME
HOW FIND YOU HIM? WE FIND THE SAME
GUILTY, HE IS THE ONE. KILL HIM.
I RAN. AND NOW FROM EXILE'S DIM
AND LONELY HAUNT I BEG OF YOU
WHY AM I HERE? WHAT DID I DO?

Tommy Siskron

Saturday

Dear Aunt Claud,

Uncle Willie got me up this morning to look at his new lawnmower. He's got it in the dining room. You ought to see it. It's as big as a small tractor. He cranked it up for me and raced the motor good, and ran it around the room a couple of times. The grass outside is ass deep on a tall Swede.

I finished the room cleaning about noon. It took four barrow loads and a couple of shovels. I never saw such a mess. And smell! Jesus Lord did it stink!

Uncle Willie left and I got to hunting around the house. He doesn't have a phone, but there is a TV set in one of the closets. You have to open the door and watch through the closet to see anything, but the set works fine. I wonder why he keeps it there.

Johnny left about eight this morning, after Uncle Willie offered to cook him some breakfast. I guess he didn't feel up to fighting ants. Me neither, so I didn't eat yet.

One of the doors, the one between the living room and the rest of the house, is nailed shut, so we have to go outside to get around to the kitchen or dining room or bedrooms. My ceiling has a little hole in it, so I moved the bed over against the wall.

Tomorrow I'm going to cut all the grass and wash those old cars. Maybe he will let me sell them for him. I could use the commission money this fall. Hell, I could use any money this fall.

I'm going now and clean the bathroom. I found a wire brush in the back seat of the old Plymouth.

Love,
Don Ragar

Friday

Dear Aunt Claud,

Uncle Willie is in a mood today. We went to the Union meeting last night and he got up and called big business a bunch of Communist bastards. The chairman told him to sit down and he called the chairman a Communist bastard, too. He sat down, though.

He grumbled all the way home and tried to find a bakery truck to run into, but there wasn't one. We stopped at the drugstore and got a malt, and some guy parked so he could not get out. Uncle Willie rammed him a couple of good licks, and then we left. That other car was pretty beat up, too.

That man called again. He's offering \$75,000 for the house and property, because the city is going to incorporate it, but Uncle Willie says hell no, he's not going to leave. The man said he can't keep his animals in town, and Uncle Willie said the man was a G. D. Communist and a Strike-breaking Scab besides. Then he hung up.

He won't let me sell the cars or mow the lawn, and everyplace we go he asks if I look like him. Do I? Tell me honestly, it won't hurt my feelings much.

I guess I'll be home in about three weeks. I'll write if anything else happens.

Love,
Don Ragar

Wednesday

Dear Aunt Claud,

I'm leaving tomorrow for Seattle, then I'm coming home, and Uncle Willie is buying me a big dinner tonight. He wanted to cook me a big meal but I said I didn't want him to go to all that trouble.

He's an odd old man, but you know what? I kind of love him. He doesn't hurt anybody. I don't even care if I look like him, as long as I'm not one of those G. D. Scabs.

Love,
Don Ragar

Herb Fackler

HAIKU

Glistening leaflet --

Hesitation of dew drops . . .

O indecision!

* * *

Listen! Melting snow --

Silver stream's gurgling chuckle . . .

Renaissance of spring.

* * *

World in twilight hush . . .

Rippling pool...floating petals

Mirrors drifting dreams

* * *

Naked branch quiv'ring

Caressed by silent snowflakes . . .

A destitute child.

Phyllis Payne

EARTHBOUND

In fear I must run, I must run.
O Lord I have cried unto Thee
Out of the depths I have called
And tiny invisible things
Stirring within me I feel.
The tips of my fingers have burst
And delicate shining green leaves
Have opened and reach for the sun.
The veins in my arms now are still.

I am blind.

I open my mouth in an effort
To say but a word to you.
The wood encircles my throat
The wood encircles my heart
And I am unable to speak.
The heavy green gods
Only stare dully down.

Dessagene Crawford

EXPLICATION OF "EARTHBOUND"

"Earthbound" reflects a general trend in the poetry of the last several decades: a trend of pessimism and loneliness. The primary theme is that of futility resulting from the inability to communicate. However, the poem expresses these ideas with some individuality. The poetess has drawn heavily upon the Greek myth of Daphne for her imagery. In this myth, Daphne was pursued by Apollo and ran from him in fear. Her supplications to the "Mother Earth" (as Robert Graves says) were heeded, and, on the point of being captured Daphne was turned into a laurel tree. The close parallel between the myth and the poem is easily noted. The protagonist of the poem, like Daphne, is running. Although the pursuer is not named, the use of the myth indicates that he is the young god. Then comes the supplication, parallel to Daphne's, but taken from Christian rather than pagan context; an answer is given. "Tiny invisible things" are felt within the narrator and she is then transformed into a tree. The tips of her fingers burst and leaves open and reach for the sun. She becomes a tree, unable to move or even to see.

Miss Crawford employs this myth in order to have an adequate vehicle for expressing her theme: the inability to communicate. The comparison of man to a plant, whose only sound is made without volition, is an excellent choice for the idea being expressed. Her poem, however, goes beyond a mere lamentation over her theme; it offers a commentary on the theme. At the beginning of the poem, the protagonist possessed the means to communicate; she could express to the Deity her need for help. She was granted this aid. As a result, though, she lost her ability to communicate and was transformed into a stationary being--one who actually has no need of communication. If the Daphne-figure had conquered her fear, had faced her pursuer, perhaps then she would have been able to keep her ability to speak. It seems as if Miss Crawford is saying that in order not to lose the ability to communicate, one must dare to speak.

In the latter part of the poem Daphne, or the poetess, realizes that she has been mistaken in fleeing from the god. Then she makes an effort to speak, to reach out to him -- but it is too late. Her prayer has been answered and she is encased within a tree. This

section is reminiscent of the Wood of Suicides in Dante's Inferno, in which persons who had committed suicide were confined to tree trunks for eternity.

The last two lines seem to synthesize the ideas of Deity presented in the poem. The pagan Earth Mother has been supplicated and has answered Daphne. The Christian God has been petitioned and has also responded. The "heavy green gods" may represent the apathetic deities of a modern world -- gods of moisture, humidity, and algae--who are not concerned with the plight of Daphne. Perhaps this concept of naturalistic gods is the reason for the basic ideas of pessimism and loneliness. These gods would not care whether or not men had the ability to communicate with each other.

In conclusion, "Earthbound" seems a new way of expressing the theme of man's loneliness. The use of the Greek myth and the blending of deities indicates different concepts of God. And Miss Crawford seems to be demanding that modern man exercise the privilege of communication -- and that he not confine himself within a wooden shell.

James Donald Farley

Death came quietly this clear morning,

a blue shadow moving trackless across the icy fields.

It entered the confines of a furnished room where old Mr. M

slept along by a gas blaze, his table littered with
bottles and pills.

Into the moist, warm, closeness Death came and dragged him
out to frolic in the snow.

Jerry O'Dell

The perpetual stranger has come again and gone
Amid the bursting buds of incipient spring,
Unopposed by the buzzing life of bees
Or the infant pressure of unfolding green.

He kept his quiet afternoon appointment
At a small house bright in April sun,
Fulfilled his charge with gentle punctuality,
And returning, plucked a rose from the blooming garden.

Jerry O'Dell

TO END A SERENADE

Sing me no songs of love, for you yourself
do not know what it is to have a thing
called "love" exist between two secret souls.
No one can know what love between a man
and woman is, except when he himself
has loved so many people that he can
average all their similarities
and differences in mathematical
abstraction and thus reach a cold conclusion.
You have not; so speak no more of love.

Dessagene Crawford

THE PARTY

The music had risen in tempo and intensity for the past hour, until now it insistently beat against him.

People moved through the brightly lit room, sending wakes of smoke swirling into each other.

He had sunk into a chair, too weak with laughter, and liquor, and smoke to stand.

He sat, trying to re-compose himself. He watched the group parade before him - women with heavy breasts and heads of straw. Women wrapped in tight skirts, who moved through long-familiar routines; Men with faces shining with perspiration, men with padded shoulders and bulging waists, and hands that nervously held a captured glass or cigarette, or both.

He watched their ritual-like movements. He watched them touch each other and dissolve into laughter - moving rhythmically to the music.

Each person had secreted around himself a sphere of translucent material. The room was filled with giant, cloudy marbles. A mist swirled inside the spheres. All he could see was the outline of their naked forms, moving to the pulsing beat of the music and laughter. The marbles were stirred around the room, and they clinked as they touched without giving way.

A Christmas tree covered with blinking lights and shiny balls. Around the base of the tree were scattered among the gifts fragments of bright globes which had fallen and shattered on the floor.

He was in a crater filled
with water and soap.
The water was boiling rapidly around him,
parching, withering his skin.
Great clouds of steam rose into the air.
The churning water covered him with
glimmering bubbles of soap, each one filled with light.
The bubbles washed over his head. They were
in his mouth, his nose, his eyes.

The water of the dark lake was wonderfully cool on his
skin. He swam gracefully, easily.
The waters surrounded him with a mass of
jelly-like eggs. The spheres clung to him.
He was thrashing, pulled down by their weight.
The globes were shattered, and
slimy, squirming creatures
attached themselves to him.
He was flailing blindly, trying to
wipe them from his body
and keep above water.

What's the matter, John, you spill your drink?
Honey, bring a drink here for Johnny-boy.
Take it easy, man, the liquor's on its way--
party's not over yet. Hurry, will you, hon...

David Ewing

Now is the waning time
A pale hour of fading light
The birds have fled
Leaving the broken fingers of the trees
To supplicate the frozen air

The leaves in flaming rebellion
Have flung their futile protest to the stars
And lie in brown unhappy heaps
Crushed by the foot they emit
The final crackle of life becoming dust

Jerry O'Dell

WALK AWAY

The grey pavement was sweaty under his feet. Clouds of mist hung over the city and diffused its lights, creating a yellow luminescent glow which cast weird softly-defined shadows on the concrete giants around him. He was alone. The steady rhythm of his footsteps was quite enough company. People had long ceased to be company for him, and even his thoughts left him bitter, cold, and empty. He shrugged, pulling his coat collar up. The mist had become a light erratic drizzle. Occasionally a car horn sounded, shattering the stillness of the night with its harsh reverberations.

A deep need thrust itself upon him, casting itself through every fiber of his body; pulsating, throbbing, and now insistent.... the need of something to warm a man's soul. A search of his pockets produced a sudden shudder. Maybe one drink-----just one. Next corner, turn right. Hurry!

Carrie's was sandwiched between Durban's Cleaners and Lefkowitz's all-too-familiar shop. The three brass balls above Lefkowitz's door stood guard; glistening with the sweat of the night. The familiar darkness of Carrie's swallowed him. Choosing a table, he moved through the shroud of stale tobacco smell... the faint noises suddenly penetrating his mind's limbo.

"Hi." Carrie's most cordial greeting broke rudely upon him. He hated those yellow broken teeth, his small black eyes looked like raisins stuffed into a huge ball of dough; sweat trickled down over the dough, following the outline of the dough-chins, pausing-----only to drop onto the filthy collar of his shirt.

Turning away, he slumped into a chair next to the wall. Carrie plodded over, his bear-like feet making a scraping sound on the dirty floor. "What'll it be?"

Carrie was 'nothing,' standing there naked and sloppy for the world to see and smell. "Bourbon." Carrie Shuffled away, retreating to his stronghold. Unconscious moments passed. Carrie returned with the drink, startling him to consciousness. His last forty cents----forty lousy cents! He surrendered them and surveyed the deep brown liquid: ambrosia to quench his thirst----- but the soul's hunger persisted and gnawed at his entrails. He savored the first swallow with an almost excruciating pleasure, swilling it around inside his mouth, permitting it to warm the tender

flesh there, before letting it slide away on the first leg of its ultimate journey.

His pleasure was interrupted by nervous female laughter which pressed its way through the thick smoke. He glanced toward the sound. The girl was thin and angular, a nervous smile covered her otherwise indifferent face. She was undoubtedly exchanging lewd secrets with the thick-necked, greasy-haired man across the table. Her bare arms were visible in the dim light; a thin mat of black hair covered them. He turned away, repulsed.

His gut was warm now. The thirst quenched; the soul's hunger yet unfed. The door banged shut behind him; the glass rattled in its frame. Carrie wouldn't like that. The slob!

The night was clearer now. The steam of the day's heat rose from the gutters and the sidewalks and the walls. Bubbles of moisture danced in the lights, giving the air an almost effervescent quality. He turned and walked through the bubbles - - - through his stagnant thoughts - - - through his fears and failures, then down into the soothing blackness of enveloping peace.

Pablo

A little worm lay, quite sore perplexed
In his dirty little hole, for standing next
Was a somewhat empty bird, with thought
To eat him. Then an idea genius wrought,
Said worm decided to dig to China
Where he thought that he would find a
Place to lose that American Bird.
In China he was eaten by a Chinese Bird.

Tommy Siskron III

THE THUNDER LOVER

Before the sunlight, which poets liken to God's smile,
I drop my head and squint to see.

Often the singing of birds in velvety green trees,
Grates on my nerves like fingernails on a blackboard.

The softness of a summer breeze playing about my ears,
Makes me ashamed of the feminine pleasure
I take in its softness.

The blackness of a stormy sky, ominous with lightning
dirks,
Turns me fierce and defiant, as a man should be.

The biting slap of rain, almost cutting the meat from
my face,
Makes me laugh and show my teeth in a snarl.

The roar of thunder, like Thor's cloud-bound bowling
alley,
Raises my voice to cry, "I hear you up there! Come
down and play!"

And the sudden, cowardly lull after elemental violence
Is a defeat itself, cheating victory.

Herb Fackler

Mist-laden night wind
carefully smoothes
restless seas
With cool white fingers.

Patt Byrd

TORTUOUS SOLITUDE

Silence---Silence---Silence---

The reticent mood around unfolds

Silence---Silence---Silence---

Slowly breeding thoughts more bold.

Musing begins---crescendos until

A spark of passion commences to build.

The sound of pulsebeat tympanically grows;

Dynamically black horses with the grace of prose

Drive forward---rushing, their jet-black hide

Magnificently issues forth the sweat, and from me inside

It egresses---a liquid cold, contrasting

With gasping hot breaths---clashing

With torrents of past quests!

The heat of blackness consumes, stifles,

And forces to consciousness the desire that rifles---

Silence---Silence---Silence---

And the peace of restless sleep.

David R. Saucier, Jr.

A FABLE FOR OUR TIME

Once, in far Tasmania, there lived a large family of koala bears. These bears lived in a huge eucalyptus tree, by a tiny spring, in the midst of the dry Tasmanian plain. The koala bears were happy, for they had the juicy eucalyptus leaves to nibble as they worked. The little bears loved this idyllic existence, and faced countless happy days of wicker weaving in the dappled sunlight beneath their tree.

Now a group of armadillos, who also inhabited the plain, grumbled about the lighthearted bears. They peered from their holes and uttered dark words beneath their breaths. Finally the armadillos decided something had to be done. Very soon, in the dark of a particularly hot Tasmanian night, these wicked beasts crept into the cool oasis and felled the eucalyptus tree. As one might guess the little bears were distraught. Not only had several of their fellows been killed in the fall, but they knew their oasis would soon become desert, and that they would spend the rest of their days toiling, like the armadillos, under the blazing Tasmanian sun. Because the horney armadillos were much stronger and meaner than the koalas, all the bears could do was hang their heads and resign themselves to a weary, tedious existence. At last report the bears had peacefully accepted the loss of their tree. Things became much as they were before, but the bears worked with hanging heads, and none ever laughed, or even smiled.

Moral: Inhabitants of the Tasmanian desert
have no right nibbling eucalyptus
leaves and being happy.

James Henderson

MID-DAY

Noon is just that time of day
when immodest trees
have slowly let their shadows slither
down around their knees.

Dessagene Crawford

JIM: "ONE OF US"

In Lord Jim, Marlow tells us that Jim is the measure of all men, that "...from weakness that may be hidden, ...not one of us is safe." Again and again, Marlow speaks of Jim as "one of us" and each time the phrase appears, it takes on a deeper meaning until it finally includes all humanity. We see in Jim the ambiguity that is inherent in every man, the enigma that is both the downfall and the salvation of all. Jim's struggle between moral good and moral corruption, his quest to find "How to be" (153) all saint or all devil, is the eternal struggle of mankind. Conrad dwells on and develops this theme of ambiguity as he wraps Jim in mystery, assigns Marlow the task of interpreting, and Stein the task of applying Jim's case to all of humanity. It is Marlow who calls to our sight every man who is consciously or unconsciously involved in Jim's fate.

Why man is such an ambiguous, enigmatic creature is a question Conrad does not try to answer. Instead, he has Stein show us the way to live with our ambiguity:

There is only one remedy!
One thing alone can us
from ourselves cure!...
The way is to the destructive
element submit yourself,
and with the exertions of
your hands and feet
in the water make the
deep, deep sea keep you up. (152-53)

When man realizes, as Stein does and Jim fails to do, that he cannot be all good or all evil, that he is continuously and desperately involved in the struggle between moral good and moral corruption, then, and only then, is he able to live as a man. It is this truth that Jim fails to realize which causes him "...to celebrate his wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct." (300)

As Marlow says, "and that's the end. He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven,

¹Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim, ed. Morton Dauwen Zabel (Boston, 1958) p. 33 (Other references to this edition will be indicated by page number in parenthesis).

and excessively romantic." Jim is gone, elusive, yet eternally constant. And we, with Marlow, must "...answer for his eternal constancy." (300), for he is, "one of us."

Patt Byrd
(Reprinted from the Rectangle of
Sigma Tau Delta)

14,952

14,952 is an even number

I will list them for you:

14,952 times every second of every hour of every day of the week, especially on rainy Friday afternoons, but Never on La Dolce Vita...

14,952 chicken embryos brutally crushed in Garden City for Readers' Digest in 1939 alone...

14,952 feet of two inch thick asphalt leading to an exit with a sign saying:
"This way out"...

14,952 miles travelled by quasi-Kerouacs trying to find something they left at home...

14,952 days before the Edict of Nantes there was a small child crying in the foothills of the Pyrenees to the soft strains of a lullaby...

14,952 grunion caught at the moment of completion for the sake of diversion...

14,952 eyes watched a Florida chimpanzee impress the civilized inhabitants of the Congo...

14,952 raindrops falling on electrified barbed-wire fences...

14,952 pictures of Shirley Temple and Jackie Cooper in a
passionate embrace before the age of reason...

14,952 questions asked President Kennedy and he could answer
every one of them...

14,952 years in the future perhaps first hand information for
another Darwin...

14,952 fourteen thousand, nine hundred fifty-two's and that's
just about it...

And yet, 14,953 is next, and that's pretty damn odd.

Chat Reed

CYNOSURES

Ecstasy:

Hanging over the abyss of truth by a thread
of sanity.

Time:

An old bitch trotting along a dusty road with
sagging tits slapping one hind leg and then
the other.

God:

A black orchid and sweet sugar candy.

Newspaper:

Words running across a page screaming.

Roger Dick Johns

OUT OF THE CRADLE

From the warmth of the sea, the winds breathed heavily upon the dampness of the earth. The sands of the shore conversed with the ocean droplets and the water became pregnant with the grains. Here and there the tall jutting rocks of the reefs were momentarily bared by the rhythmic flow of the tide. And all was silent but the murmuring of the sea. In the night air hung the ocean's heaviness. Alexis was walking along the beach, head bent, and eyes looking but not seeing. Beneath his feet, the sand was crushed leaving an imprint upon the earth which the sea would wash away in its constant ebbing. He stopped, reached into his shirt pocket for a cigarette, and continued his slow, measured pace. He had no direction in mind. He often came to the sea - there to think - there to get away from the rest of the world - there to be refreshed in the misty breeze. Alexis was a college senior. He had passed through all the phases of a student: the champion of optimism, challenging the cynics; next the avowed agnostic, arguing for man's total dependence upon himself and the uselessness of any outside help; then came the year of general apathy. He didn't fight for anything. He didn't care for anyone. He studied only because he had nothing else to do - no purpose - no reason. Furthermore, he said he didn't need a reason, that he could do without a purpose, that the whole rotten world could open up and swallow itself and he wouldn't care. He said that, but even then he thought otherwise. He reached out for something - anything - as a baby reaches out for his mother who's no longer there - but gripped only empty space. So now he walked by the sea. He stopped, then raised his head to look over the expanse of water to see the other side. His eyes were glassy and misty, distorting his view. His palms were moist and cold. His cigarette was burned almost to the filter. He started walking again. He felt the dampness as it crept up his clothes. It slowed his walk. His feet sank deeper. The sky began to look as though viewed in a carnival mirror. His pace hesitated, and then Alexis stopped - never to move of his own will again.

James Donald Farley

HERB FACKLER, a transfer student from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, is a junior majoring in English. Herb is a resident of Mansfield, Louisiana.

JAMES DONALD FARLEY, a senior English major, plans to enter graduate school next fall to do work in the seventeenth century period. Don has played the lead role in several productions of the Marjorie Lyons Playhouse and spent last summer in Pineville, Ky., with The Book of Job.

TOMMY HEAD, president of the local Sigma Tau Delta Chapter, is an English major from West Monroe, La. He plans to attend graduate school in English.

JAMES HENDERSON is the editor of the winter INSIGHTS, and has recently had a story published in the Rectangle of Sigma Tau Delta. Jimmy is a history major from Bogalusa, La.

ROGER DICK JOHNS will spend next year as a Rotary International Fellow at the University of Zurich. He is a senior from Mansfield whose major interests are literature and theology.

JERRY O'DELL served as an associate editor for this issue of INSIGHT. He is a junior from Bossier City majoring in English.

PHYLLIS PAYNE, a sophomore English major from Marshall, Tex., is one of Sigma Tau Delta's newest initiates.

CHAT REED has been the recipient of the Mabel Campbell Award for creative writing. Chat is a resident of Shreveport, majoring in English.

DAVID R. SAUCIER, JR. is a physics major from Bossier City who has also had work published by the American College Poetry Society.

BILL SHAW, a junior from Shreveport majoring in English, is a new pledge of Sigma Tau Delta.

TOMMY SISKRON, a recent pledge of Sigma Tau Delta, is a pre-medical student from Shreveport.

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SPRING, 1963



Spring, 1963
Volume One, Number Two

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

We wish to express our appreciation to Dean Bond Fleming for his encouragement and indulgence. It would be well to note that those who worked on this second issue gained insights from the production of the first issue.

Several illustrations are included in this number. We wish to thank Mr. Willard Cooper, Chairman of the Art Department, and his students for their cooperation.

Perhaps as a result of a pointed note in the winter issue there are more prose works in this second Insights. We would encourage continued emphasis on this literary form for those who are new to the field of creative writing.

The faculty sponsor of Sigma Tau Delta is Dr. E. M. Clark. A printed statement of appreciation falls short in its inadequacy.

The Editors

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

PATT BYRD, a junior English major from Boulder, Colorado, was also a contributor to the Winter issue of INSIGHTS. Patt, a newly elected Maroon Jacket, has also had work published in the Rectangle of Sigma Tau Delta.

STEVE CLINTON is a freshman from El Dorado, Arkansas. He was a contributor to the Winter, 1962 issue of INSIGHTS.

DESSAGENE CRAWFORD, a Senior English major from Jefferson, Texas, recently received a NDEA Fellowship for graduate work in linguistics at Texas Christian University. Dessagene is secretary-treasurer of Sigma Tau Delta.

(Continued on last page)

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FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, GIVE YOUR SOUL TO GOD

Evangelist Michael Sand is lost; at least that seems to be the terminology of church people. However, no one knows this except Brother Sand. His large flock believes in Michael Sand so much, that I wonder if they know who was crucified. They tell him everything about themselves, even the most intimate secrets of personal habit and feelings. A woman once felt so guilty that she confessed every sin to him that she ever remembered committing. It took her almost six hours. Brother Sand especially enjoyed this particular woman, for he learned a lot. It was like taking a personal possession of a soul and molding it into his desired shape. And the best part about it was that she did not know she had lost anything.

For the past five nights Brother Sand has been conducting a summer tent revival in a small Arizona town. Tonight, Saturday night, is the last night. It is, as Brother Sand jokes to himself, the hell night, which is the subject of his sermon.

"Good evening, Brother Sand," said the bent old lady.

"We've been praying all afternoon for God's blessing on you," said her husband, a dried-up, red-faced man.

"Thank you and may God bless you tonight," Brother Sand cheerily replied.

He briskly strolled up to the songleader and pianist, said a few words, and sat down in a hardback seat directly behind the pulpit. He bowed his head and after a few moments began to quiver as his lips agonized a prayer. Through the audience could be seen others trembling with tears in their eyes.

"There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood
In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb.

Are your garments spotless, are they white as snow?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

He rose from his seat and strode to the pulpit.

"Tonight, as I have seen many of you making blessed intercession for the souls of your lost loved ones, as I have seen the tears of humility flow from your sorrowed hearts, my heart has been touched by the holy fullness of God's spirit. He has moved me to speak on the most horrible thing contained in his Holy Word, and that is Hell," he gasped in tremendous fear.

"There is one preparatory point I wish to make about Hell. If you are there for a million years, burning but never being consumed

by God's eternal flames, there is still another million and another million and another million years left, and that's still not the end of your agony," he shouted.

A young woman pleaded, "O please God." Her voice broke at the word "God."

"In Hell there is no rest for the weary, no water for the thirsty no bread for the hungry, ever, ever, ever, ever. . . ," he whispered as in a trance. "There is only the red pain of God's fire. Can't you see all the pitiful groveling souls in Hell looking up to the golden streets of Heaven and seeing God on His mighty throne. And God shouts for all the ends of eternity to hear: 'Too late sinner! Too late sinner! Too late sinner!' Oh, where will you go, poor sinner, on that day when God shall judge in fire. For Christ's sake, give your soul to God!"

He jumped off the pulpit and jerked his pants leg up. "Goddammit to hell, I've been bit by a snake!"

The old lady grabbed her chest and fell choking and blue to the dirt floor. The young woman just sat there petrified. Brother Sand fell to the floor, screaming and blubbering curses. The snake, a five foot rattler, skimmed under the edge of the tent. The people never moved, they only stood gasping at the writhing man. "My God, I'll die! Please-----somebody help!" he screamed.

The old man rose from his wife's purple body and shuffled down the aisle to the jerking body of Brother Sand. And as the form whimpered the old man spat in his face. Then as quick as morning stars, the flock disappeared into the summer night, leaving a man foaming and gurgling in the dirt.

Steve Clinton



MARÍA TERESA RAMÓN

Through infected glassy eyes the gray of the wall could scarcely have been visible. The baby María Ramón lay in a rattan basket amid rags which undulated beneath gleaming emerald flies. As if sensing a crisis, the lice in her small damp hair moved more slowly. The flies crawled over the angular, almost obscene face, but avoided the working mouth as in respect of humanity, or as though possessing humanity of their own.

The woman sat and stared out of the shack. She stupidly stared across the bay at the shrouded tower. Someone had told her once in her youth, not long before, that it housed the leaders of her people. María Teresa Ramón shuddered, and slightly moved and existed no more. A large green fly lighting into her mouth pronounced his benediction.

Had syphilis left the woman's brain unmarked she would have looked around her, and at the distant tower, and wondered--- nothing.

James Henderson

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and
frankincense

-The Song of Songs

See, He comes, scattering clouds,
Radiant, with the sun at His back
Splendid, in robes of gold and purple.
His brightness is like the yellow rays
That pierce through diminishing rain.
And I tremble at His salutation,
From fear, and wonder, and quiet delight,
Then out of my dimness raise fluid eyes
To receive His coming,
And with open hands and leaping heart cry out
O, my King.

Jerry O'Dell

TURTLE: A PROSE POEM

Oh tell me wrinkled, thick-skinned, bunch-backed
unfeeling bird without wings, how do you go on?
I can't. You are Time's Fool because adandoned
eggs are not enough. Galapagos is not enough
even though it is Urwelts. Timelessness has no
center. White shells and sluggish stumblings on
endless sands. So free and yet no soul. No vision,
only symbol embalmed is creed, system, school.
White and cold facades on endless streets going
nowhere. You carry the world on your back but you
do not suffer. Men must suffer. Man must suffer,
this is his God-made existence. You made Eden a joke.
Java, Ur, Thebes and now New York are but burning candles
to you. Do you remember the Song of the Turtle, your
song, old one: "In the begining was the Absurd,
and I was there picking the ice cream out of my teeth
with an oriental phallic symbol. God and Mary
back in bed; Adam and Eve and now we're dead. And
all is good, world without Amen." Oh too, too, too!
You are the mystery of Genesis, But you are dead---
a bombed-out crater---atimoneer sans spirit. Come
with me and melt with Ruth and Joe and Janie and all
of us when the bomb goes. Uterine heaven foe you
and me. Let us burn and make sweet smoke ascending
to our Puritan Nirvana like a tired prayer. But at
my back...But at my back...No not me! How dies the
serpent?--a long day's dying. Because I cannot
see ahead, I must turn back. Nae man can tether
time or tide. Man has no root in time and does
devour the precious moments he has. The swiftly
turning wheel does not stand. I cannot face new
worlds without old. So I shall renounce my
dreams and throw away my wand to lie with you old
hide-bound box in your desert of eternity. So take
me back into time Old Turtle. Old Tiger, be my
guide. O Crash, O Cracker Jack, Sis, Boom---Bah!
Ageless link on the Millennial Chain.

Dick Johns

THE YELLOW EPHEMERA

"Please don't ever think of death. I know it's hard, for I was once like you. I can make it easier if you will let me tell you a story which I think of often, and I hope it will make you happy, too.

"A yellow ephemera appeared one day. I stood by a bench and was savoring a tiredness known only to those caught in the enigma of an existence which momentarily felt not bright yellow, but dusky brown laced with shifting black.

"I looked at my yellow apparition and smiled, sadly, I am sure, for when I ponder existence I like to smile sadly. I suppose it makes me feel wise, or understanding, or a little sorry for myself. The particle of color spun on a small twist of breeze which was as warm, and as soft, and as fragrant as . . . as only a twist of breeze can be on a summer afternoon. I wanted to laugh, at least I think I wanted to laugh, at this insolent bit of nothing, this impudent abstraction which spun and looped upon invisible cushions of summer air. 'You fool,' I said in what I am sure was an understanding tone. 'What do you know about life?' I stopped. He was! This ephemera was laughing for animal happiness. I hope an ephemera is an animal, for if it is, I can use it again when my mind wanders this way again. You do understand what I mean?

"But as I was saying, I was standing in a day; a soft day of dappled shadow, and sunny spots of grass, and velvet breezes, and I was watching a yellow ephemera from a darkened mind when suddenly my floating bit of happy nothing was dead. I don't suppose it matters how or why it happened, but I will tell you anyway. It was a rakish bird which came from nowhere and went nowhere, but it did it with dispatch and not a wasted motion. The bird was dusky brown and I thought, and please don't laugh, I thought his feathers laced with black. What could I do? I wanted to cry, and mourn, and leave a marble slab which would say: 'Here died a yellow ephemera which was taken from happiness and a bed of summer air.' It happened then. I saw my friend, for then it was my friend, and it was lighting on my shoulder. It told me that it's several days were happy, but ended, which was just as well, for if they endured what could they be but just as happy, and if somewhere else it endured, could it be more happy? Then I knew. Now it is caught forever in my memory. It is but a memory floating and spinning on the summer afternoon.

"You are right. There are no such things that time of year,
and surely, no yellow ones. I knew, really. I'm sorry, I won't
bother you again."

James Henderson

She kissed me in the stillness of night,
And as I loved to return her embrace,
The shadows fell and I saw her face.
'Tis a shame the stars were so bright.

Steve Clinton

Sonnet on MARTIN EDEN

With slowly moving wings, the weary bird
flies high above the sea in journey home
for rest. From there, it will not move to roam
the catacombs of men though once they stirred
its throat to sing. Its music shall be heard
no more within the feigned façade which foams
about its prey to draw it down the dome
reversed -- Charybdis calls with cloven word.

An inner voice rebukes the guileful lure:
"Fly on," it says, "fly on beyond the clutch
of envy. Purify yourself. Defy
The tempting cry. With strengthened wings endure
the flight until the soothing waters touch
your memories. Fly to Lethe, fly."

j. donald farley

L'ESPACE

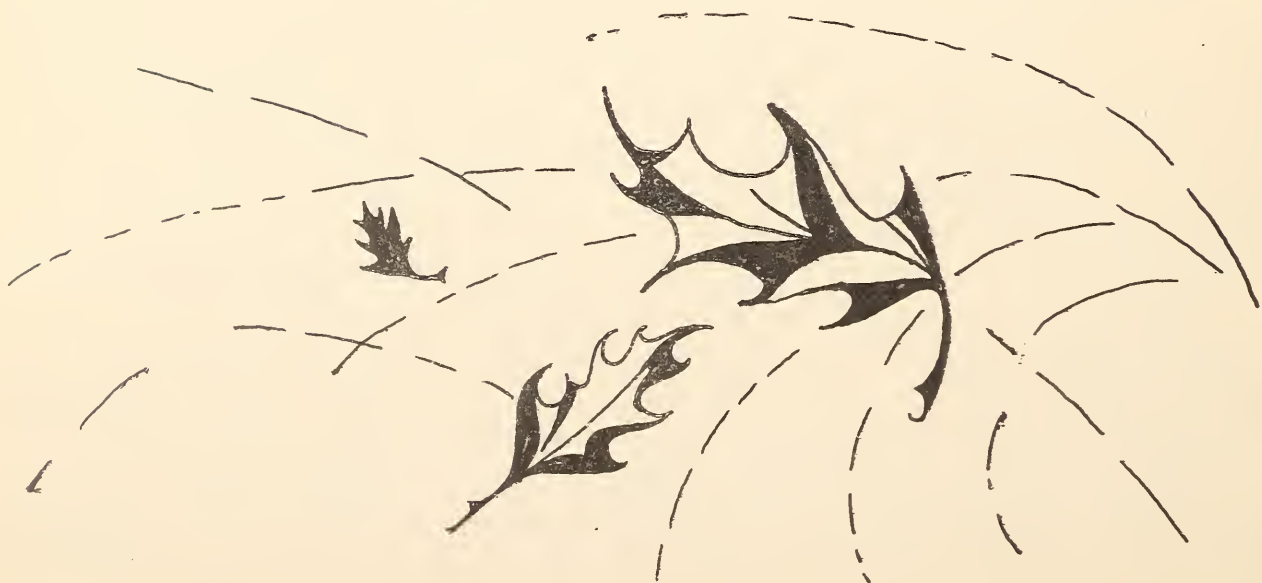
Les nuages me passaient
Ils s'étaient pressés
Ils allaient au bord de la vue.

Les feuilles tombaient
De leur sanctuaire
Ils m'attendaient
Point, moi qui visais
Au pied de la vie.

Je me sentais
Perdu et enfoncé
Mon coeur ne pleurait
Plus pour mon amitié

Pendant les nuages qui me passaient
Et les feuilles qui tombaient,
A moi, j'étais blessé;
L'espace me disait
"Tu ne point vivais."

Roy J. Dupuy



L'ESPACE:
Translation and Explication

Space

The clouds passed me
They were hurrying
They were going to the limits of sight.

Leaves were falling
From their sanctuary
They were not waiting for me
I who was also looking
At the foot of life.

I felt myself
Lost and sinking
My heart no longer wept
For my love.

While the clouds were passing me
and the leaves were falling,
To me, I felt wounded;
Space said to me
"You no longer were living."

"L' espace" seems to be a poem written on the impulse of a momentary thought. This does not mean the lines are lacking in polish, as the poet probably reworked them after the first writing. But I do think he has captured a fleeting thought; as clouds and leaves pass, he feels abandoned. Suddenly he realizes that, even though he is alone, his "heart" has ceased weeping. And this realization is shocking. The poet -- or the narrator of the poem, if they are not the same -- receives from "space" the concept that he was keeping himself from living. He was concentrating on the "foot of life," an image which seems to suggest that he was not paying attention to things truly of importance. Hope seems implied in the last stanza as the protagonist realizes he has turned from this method of thinking and thus he may cease weep-

ing, forget his love, and return to society.

Any translator regrets that the translated work does not convey the nuances of the original; and my translation must be considered only my personal rendering of the thought in Mr. Dupuy's lines. The meter of the original is regular enough to lend unity to the structure of "L'espace" but neither it nor the rime occurs in a set pattern. The poet's thoughts flow in the free metrics so frequent in contemporary French poetry, and the rime scheme lends a pleasing sound and sometimes provides emphasis (such as on "vie" and "sanctuaire").

The poem as a whole is an interesting rendition of a poet's thoughts. The form fits the subject matter by being flowing and somewhat introspective. It is indeed refreshing to see a poem from Centenary written in a language other than English.

Dessagene Crawford

your tall conceals the sun

your brown lies gray

upon the sand

and i can almost touch

your giant image

with my hand

Marilyn McLure

FIREBIRD

Creature of iridescence
Dwelling amid golden apples
And shine of fountain-spray
Singing in moonlight
Feathered apparition
With voice of lucid silver
One bright plume the power
To quench all thirst
Surmount all rainbows

Fleeing between many-colored stars
Your glittering shadow pursued
By kings and laughing children
Alluding the eager hands
The heart-shaped eyes
On instantaneous wings
Hiding in the light
Your interrupted song
Vanishes in dust of pearl

Will-spent from the taste of ashes
We turn and hear your deathless laughter
Mocking us from the farthest trees

Jerry O'Dell



FROM THE BOOK OF THE APOCALYPSE

The priests of man beheld the ashes in their hands,
and they said among themselves,
"Behold, the God is dead."

But because they feared the wrath of the people,
they dared not tell them that
the God was no more.

So the priests made for the people idols,
and they fashioned them out of
steel and mortar and mind,

And because the people had become barren and cold
and in their hearts loved only themselves,
the priests gave them idols in their own image.

But, lo, a lone voice comes, crying from the
wilderness of Man's soul, saying
"Behold, the God is not dead.
He shall arise one day from the dust of his own ashes,
And he shall cleanse the false idols from the hearts of Men
with a scourge of fire."

Diana Laney

MARLOWE

It was a little thing, or maybe three;
A beer bust among the young.
A drink, a bill, a poniard blade
Stilled the voice that had often sung.

Herb Fackler

THE TIME OF FULLNESS

Summer is not the time of fullness. There is a day in autumn when-suddenly-shirts no longer stick to your back, and feet no longer feel as though they had become one broad toe.

The wind no longer whispers seduction in the soft leaves, but blows an easy, rustling lullaby through them, and they fall. Turn back the crackling carpet and there is a smell of . . . is it rich pages in a damp old library, or is it God's breath?

There is time then to pause among the goldenesses and think of time past-of watermelons and dusty roads that made you sneeze. There is time then to realize it all. There is a time to make of the past isolated things a fullness.

Herb Fackler



Look: green pine needles

ruffled by small

willful wind;

-invisible fan!

Patt Byrd

Prima

Purple kitten-faces. . .
Long pale stems . . .
Small, sweet perfume=
Wild violets.

Tall, swaying pines . . .
Rustling branches. . .
Soft lumpy earth
With blanket of stiff needles.

Low brown brambles
Old; winter-brittle,
Crackling underfoot in April.

Teresa Shetley

A leaf falls from the branch of a tree
In the heart of a forest.
Gently, it floats to the ground,
And its death, its fall, goes unnoticed--
Only the branch knows that it is gone.

On the brown earth lies the gray-brown leaf,
No longer a part of the tree or the forest.
But in its place comes a new leaf--
Small, pale at first; quickly growing to fill
The vacant place. But it is not the same.

David Ewing

GRAVE WINTER

The snowbird sadly in the tree
Sang songs of Spring amid the sterile twigs
That Winter's cold had claimed as season's fee;
Below the ground I waited for the sprigs
Of Spring to wake and send their bodies new
Into the soft warm winds of April's day.
The morning earth so blue and white with gray.
Here in this tomb so far from life on earth
I see these things from deep within the ground;
The flowers near beside me give mute mirth
Before they go above to mark my mound.
How dark it is when Winter's cold black veil
Obscures our lives and locks us in its jail.

William E. Shaw



EPITAPH

I speak though sound flows not,
I think thoughts in knots,
I plead--the silence is rot,
Little speck go! Ye be forgot.

Roy J. Dupuy

MY KINGDOM

WELCOME! Welcome! to my Kingdom,
Land which belongs to me, I to it.
Welcome and be part of my Kingdom.
Be thankful that you have been chosen to enter my Kingdom,
And I shall be your guide.

Hear me carefully. Only you can enter my Kingdom;
I request it be so.
Leave your mate and come, for when I say, she will join you.
But don't look sad for you are in my Kingdom,
Where I am the gift of joy.
Can you work? can you build? can you destroy?
Then welcome to my Kingdom where I am your Master;
And you my servant.

If you think, you have no place in my Kingdom, for
A thinking man brings fear and chaos.
If you dream, you are a burden to society in my Kingdom,
For a dreaming man places false hope on abstractions.
"Défence à Dieu d'entrer," that must be your purpose,
For to accept another master will bring conflict in My House.
If you feel that society is wrong, remember that I ordered it.
If you find light and hope in your heart, destroy it soon
For I am light and hope, but I do not entice your hopes.
If you come with missionary zeal to change my Kingdom,
Damned is your person upon entering it.
If you think of your soul, forget it, for its salvation is in
My hands.

You enter, never to leave. This is your place, not to be
Sitting to my right, nor my left, but beneath me.
Remember as I have said, "I am your Master." You must
Serve your Master. WELCOME! WELCOME! to my Kingdom,
A land which belongs to me.

Roy J. Dupuy

TO END A SERANADE

Sing me no songs of love, for you yourself
do not know what it is to have a thing
called "love" exist between two secret souls.
No one can know what love between a man
and a woman is, except when he himself
has loved so many people that he can
average all their similarities
and differences in mathematical
abstraction and thus reach a cold conclusion.
You have not; so speak no more of love.

Dessagene Crawford

TO MISS C--, WHO MAKETH MUCH OF CERTAINTY (Being a Lyrick of Didactical Intent)

Fair ruthless lady! would'st thou be a nun
And live unsung, uncourted for thy charms
Except thy lover bring cold cipherings,
And satisfy thy dauntless intellect
That his love is commensurate with all
The loves that fill the universe?
And should he dare to lay before thine eye
A chronicle of hearts he lately knew?
Would this subdue thy wrath or kindle it
To new dimensions of fierce jealousy?

Perhaps thy knowledge doth exceed his own
And thou could'st teach him much if he should ask
Thy counsel, but such cannot be his aim
For see, he stands and offers thee his song
To be thy bauble or enduring gem
Whichever thing thy fancy shall require.
Perhaps he hath had many loves before
And chooseth thee above them all to seek;
If so thine honour truly be great
But if thou be his first, how much the more!

Jerry O'Dell

FABLE WITHOUT A MORAL

A roadrunner was speeding across a West Texas prairie when he heard someone call to him. "Hey there, come see what I have!" squeaked a voice.

Much to his surprise, the roadrunner spied his friend, the armadillo. She was staring intently at a square yard or so of sand. As he joined her, the roadrunner noticed this sandy area had writing on it. "What's this?" he inquired.

"I," the armadillo announced proudly, "have just written a poem."

As the roadrunner was a polite gentleman, he asked her to read it, and here is what it said:

The blue ethereal softness
Of the west-wind's breath
Sings in restlessness
Of the evening's death.

"Golly!" exclaimed the roadrunner, "it even rimes! That's pretty good, you know, although I'm not sure exactly what it means. I never did write a poem...but I tried once."

"It's really not hard," explained the armadillo modestly. "You just think of the prettiest things you know about and make them rime and everything. But I guess practice does help."

"I always sorta wondered about poems," said the roadrunner. "I mean, do you just get an idea and then it makes itself into a poem, or do you start with trying to write something and finally think of an idea?"

"Oh, inspiration first!" she squeaked, perking up her small ears. "In fact, I've written quite a few poems, but I just have to wait until a special idea sort of tells me it's ready to be a poem. Sometimes I think maybe there's a whole poem inside of every person and it only comes out part at a time, like the Milky Way at night. And every time you do something beautiful like laugh or sleep or write a rime or make love, that's a little bit of your real poem showing. Don't you sort of think so?"

This was very complex for the roadrunner, more accustomed to stretching his legs than his mind. At length he said, "Well, I'm not so sure. But if that is true, I guess I'll never write a poem, because this--whatever it is--never just comes to me and says 'write a poem.'" And he went sadly away.

The next day, however, the armadillo glimpsed a puff of dust, heard a flurry of feathers, and suddenly realized the roadrunner had returned. He was so excited she hardly knew what to expect. Before he slid to a halt he exclaimed excitedly, "I've done it! I've done it! I've written a poem!" The armadillo was very, very pleased and asked to hear it at once. Obliging, the roadrunner pulled out a piece of paper, cleared his throat, and read:

The prairie sun
Is lots of fun;
The prairie sky
Is wondrous high.

Like flowers in spring
The birds all sing;
The prairie sky
Is wondrous high.

"There!" he said, quietly proud. "I knew I could do it. You see," he began, not giving the armadillo a chance to speak, "I didn't have any inspiration at all, really, I just decided what I wanted to say, made it rime and fit the meter (I really worked quite hard polishing it), used a simile and a refrain--and wrote a poem!"

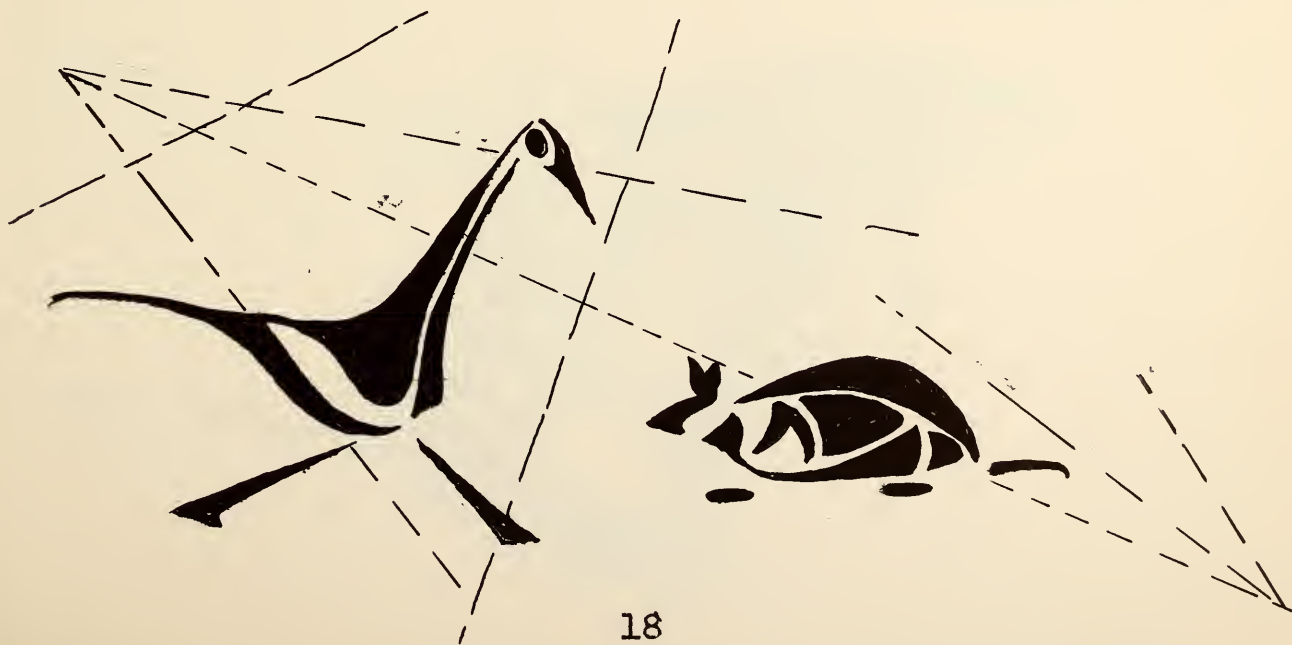
"But," protested the armadillo, "it's not a real poem! It doesn't say anything or express any emotion!"

"It says more than some wishy-washy lines about 'ethereal restlessness' which nobody can understand," he retorted.

"Can I help it if you can't say what you mean in good, plain English?" she countered.

And as the sun set over the prairie that evening they were still arguing, each convinced that his was the only way of writing a true poem.

Dessagene Crawford



SOMEWHERE BETWEEN EVERYWHERE

"Where are you going young man? This road leads to everywhere."

"To the west."

"And where have you come from young man? This road comes from everywhere."

"From the east."

"You do not smile young man. Your years cannot have earned such sorrow."

"For those who shadow the sun there are no smiles."

"You speak but little young man, only when spoken to. Surely you have seen much back there. Why do you hold your tongue?"

"You speak too much old man, and say nothing. I wish that I could not hear you. I would smile if you would go your way."

"It is funny young man, I too am going toward the west. I go my way and yours. For you see, I begin to like you. What is your name young man, if we are to be friends?"

"I am called many names by many people. I call myself Alone, and thus I wish to be, for I do not like you old man. I have no friend."

"Sit a moment young man for I am tired, I am old."

As they sat the old man lost his soul. And the young man cried.

T. Siskron, III

I think, yet I am not,
The soul that should exist
Slips into a vast oblivion,
And the mind remains
To represent the dead
In a whirling universe
Of senseless sound.

Truly Drake

HERITAGE

The shadows were sharp in the dust
The dog was lying under the dripping faucet
The house was defiant
In its nest of johnson grass

They kissed and parted and the dust swirled under his feet
As he blindly walked past memories
That haunted him until he could not think

The red monster played with him
Like the rag doll he was
And the gun powder stung

Honor, Righteousness, words are hollow
But steel is sharp and blood is red

Swirling dust filled his head
As he lay there
And then the dust settled

Chat Reed

In our moment of time-
unguarded, alone-
The leaves whisper silently
"the dove has flown."

j. donald farley



Exerpts From

LI'L RED---A COLLECTION OF FABLES

I

Lurking in the shadows in the middle of the forest was a wolf a wolf with long fangs and small red eyes. He was waiting for Li'l Red to come skipping merrily along down the path, taking a basket of goodies to Grandmother's. He waited . . . and waited. . . and waited . . . and waited. and waited.

MORAL: NEVER EXPECT A WOMAN TO BE ON TIME.

III

"It certainly is a long way to Grandmother's house," said Li'l Red. "I think I'll sit here under this tree and rest a while."

The wolf, who had been watching for his chance, crept softly through the brush until he was behind the very tree Li'l Red was resting under. Carefully he reached around the tree.

"I've gottem!" he said, and grabbed the basket of goodies. He ran down the path as fast as he could. "I've gottem, I've gottem, I've gottem!"

He was halfway home when the bomb in the basket went off.

MORAL: NEVER TRUST A WOMAN

David Ewing

expect no
burning bush

said the old
and very tired
philospher

standing amid
the autumn foliage

Jerry O'Dell

TIME TO QUIT THE PLOUGH

A Reading of "Sailing to Byzantium" as Aesthetic Theory

Few poems in the English language offer so many levels for critical reading as William Butler Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium." Cleanth Brooks has suggested three levels upon which the poem may be read: the transition from a sensual to an intellectual art; the poet's conception of the Byzantine mind; and the reverie of an old poet as he approaches death.¹ The first and third of these readings are the most commonly held, for if the poem is interpreted on the second level, it becomes purely descriptive rather than showing any spiritual conflict on the part of the speaker. Of the proponents of reading the poem as an old poet's reverie, the most adamant is Mr. John Crowe Ransom. Mr. Ransom even takes for granted a certain senility and egotism on the part of the poet.² The purpose of this paper is to give a critical reading of the poem as aesthetic theory and to show that a point of view like Mr. Ransom's coincides, on a broader level, with such a reading of the poem.

The poem opens with a picture of life in "that" country, a society characterized by instinctive obedience to the laws of nature. "Fish, flesh, or fowl" is interested only in dancing to that sensual music which pervades the entire civilization. The poet, however, points out the transitory nature of a society in which an individual is only "begotten, born, and dies." Although the animal life is busy with love, sex, and mating, the birds are described as "dying generations." It is easy to imagine that art produced in a society interested only in following animal instincts would be a totally representational art, with insistence on an accurate picture of the temporary, mortal side of life. "Monuments of unaging intellect" are entirely ignored.

The opening line of the poem states "That is no country for old men;" the second stanza explains why. In a society oriented to love and mating, an old man has nothing in the future except death. To give him a reason for living, "soul" must "clap its hands and sing." The song which "soul" sings must be a song of soul's own spiritual and intellectual creation, a creation more permanent than one celebrating only physical life. Because permanent intellectual creations are impossible in "that" country, the poet has "sailed the seas and come to the holy city of Byzantium."

Because the speaker describes himself as an old man, critics have reasoned that he must be advanced in years, and have left an area of deeper meaning unexplored. Mr. Ransom, for one, does not seem to realize that "old" does not necessarily imply physical age. In the essay, "The Autumn of the Body," Yeats relates that when he first began to write, he "desired to describe outward things as vividly as possible and took pleasure ... in picturesque and declamatory books." Suddenly, however, he found that he "lost the desire of describing outward things and found that ... [he] took little pleasure in a book unless it was spiritual and unemphatic."³ This essay was written in 1898 when Yeats was thirty-three years old, certainly not an old man. He goes on to tell how he finds a similar process occurring in artists all over Europe. No longer did these artists find a photographic method satisfactory, but felt that they must emphasize the spiritual elements in human experience. To give a reason for this change, Yeats quotes from an Irish poet: "The very sunlight's weary, it's time to quit the plough."⁴ Yeats interprets this statement by explaining that man, because he has conquered the exterior world and grown weary of it, has turned to an interior, spiritual world. The resulting loss of physical detail in art has been called "decadence" by some, but Yeats prefers to call it "the autumn of the body." To Yeats this turning inward seems to be a process connected with a certain mental attitude, not with old age. Although Yeats may use images such as "autumn," "weariness," and "age" to describe this attitude, his own experience shows that age is not a prerequisite for its occurrence. Thus an interpretation of "Sailing to Byzantium" as the plea of an aged, egotistical poet to be allowed to perpetuate himself through his verse is a rather shallow, literal point of view.

In the third stanza, the poet prays to the "sages standing in God's holy fire" -- the fire of poetic inspiration -- to deliver him from the dying world of the flesh. He asks for the release of his soul, still "sick with desire and fastened to a dying animal," into the artifice of eternity," which is itself a product of the human imagination.

The speaker has earlier revealed his destination as Byzantium, a civilization which was preoccupied with philosophy and theology. The religion of the Byzantine empire was distinguished by its belief that the spirit of God does not visit men individually, but rather as a body through collective worship. Only through community can religious experience be had. Yeats reveals his admirations for the Byzantine culture in A Vision:

I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic, and practical life were one, that architect and artificers...spoke to the multitude and the few alike...were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject matter and that the vision of a whole people.

In "Sailing to Byzantium," the poet asks for an impersonal art, using for its subject the common spiritual values of men rather than their personal differences. Although the Byzantium of this poem may not conform to the historical Byzantium in every detail, it surely symbolizes a culture in which all aspects of human life are closely integrated and in which the essence of these aspects is explored by means of a rather formal, intellectualized art.

In the last stanza, the poet promises that once he is released from the physical world, he will never take his "bodily form from any natural thing." Rather, he will become an artificial bird made of "hammered gold and gold enameling" by Byzantine craftsmen. The bird has long been used as a symbol of the soul after death. "In the Babylonian Hades souls wore a feather dress and in ancient Egypt the ba or soul was thought of as a bird...in Homer the souls of the dead 'twitter.'"⁵ Yeats uses the bird as the symbol of the freedom of the purified soul, completely divorced from nature. In contrast to the "birds in the trees" of the first stanza, the golden bird is rigid and much more permanent than the natural bird which will eventually grow old and die. Although the bird is a symbol of the freedom of the imagination, its metal construction suggests that this freedom must be exercised within fixed forms and traditions to preserve some measure of stability.⁶ The golden bird sits upon a golden bough, which in Greek mythology serves as Aeneas's passport into the unknown regions of the underworld. The symbols of bird and bough fuse to give the artist a disciplined, spiritual art which enables him to explore the unknown regions of the human mind and as a result, sing of that which is "past, or passing, or to come."

The basic conflict of "Sailing to Byzantium" is the opposition of a natural, representational art whose purpose is only to describe natural phenomena, to a rigid, intellectualized art which uses nature only as a means of gaining spiritual insight.

There can be little doubt as to which the poet prefers. "The Autumn of the Body" makes this preference clear:

He [Man] grew weary when he said, 'These things that I touch and see and hear alone are real,' for he saw them without illusion at last, and found them but air and dust and moisture. And now he must be philosophical above everything, even about the arts, for he can only return the way he came, and so escape from weariness, by philosophy. The arts are, I believe, about to take upon their shoulders the burdens that have fallen upon the shoulders of priests, and to lead us back upon our journey by filling our thoughts with the essences of things, and not with things.⁷

Tommy Head

NOTES

¹Cleanth Brooks, Jr., "The Vision of William Butler Yeats," Southern Review, IV (Summer 1938), 133.

²John Crowe Ransom, "The Irish, the Gaelic, the Byzantine," Southern Review, VII (Winter 1941), 517-576.

³William Butler Yeats, "The Autumn of the Body," Essays and Introductions (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 189.

⁴Ibid., p. 191.

⁵F. A. C. Wilson, W. B. Yeats and Tradition (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 32.

⁶Howard Baker, "Domes of Byzantium," Southern Review, VII (Winter 1941), 640.

⁷Yeats, "Autumn," p. 193.

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PASTORAL

He had had a good morning. He had hitched with two pulp wood trucks and an old fellow who was going in to see about fertilizer. It was about the best time he had ever made on the patched farm roads. He was still smiling about the old man trying to talk and chew at the same time. Seemed like he would have been happier off doing one or the other. The side of his truck was stained all the way down. Couldn't stop he figured. Not even for something as important as that. No one had much time to stop in the spring.

The road was steaming after the slight rain around noon. There was a smell of asphalt, nitrates, and body that hung around. He started thinking about that God-awful smelling perfume he had met in Nashville. That was bad. Never go back to Nashville. Bill Bailey was coming home.

He remembered home, sadly. He kept telling himself that it was only because he was in the same county that he wanted to stop off or just ride through depending. He knew he couldn't rationalize his way out of this mess. He felt like he was 48.

Then he started mumbling and bitching at himself like he had done at least six times a day for the last week. He was 26, out of work, and tired. This was the worst part. Sure, he didn't have any brass band when he left, but he had made sure that everyone knew he wasn't coming back. Not for a long, long time anyway. Only 3 years on the road, and nothing to say for it other than memories that gave him an intense desire to throw up.

He had been gone for 3 years, but he remembered everything he saw, the strange trees that were twisted behind the barn with the SEE ROCK CITY sign on it. The highway signs were either the same, or they were new ones already shot up. He had done his share.

There was that night when they were throwing beer bottles out the windows at the field hands and one hit a sign and bounced back through the windshield.

Then what he considered his one emotional shortcoming came back. He felt like he was going to start bawling. He always got that way in movies when there were nice people who got killed or something, maybe in a German bombing run or an Indian raid or when they were eating radishes in "Gone With The Wind." "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn" equals big ears and denims equals that cowboy in "The Misfits" out chasing cows for dog food companies. Well, dogs have to eat too.

He decided that it wouldn't make any difference to anyone at home whether he cried or not, either they wouldn't notice or they would. He hoped they would. It was a small sacrifice.

Chat Reed

AS A FALLOW FIELD

As a fallow field was I,
Until you came.
Brown, barren devoid of life;
Baking in the summer sun,
Gleaming cold in winter's rain,
I waited - until you came.

As a tree I stood, before you came;
Alone and sere.
Standing stark before the winter's blast,
With naked arms outstretched;
Uncaring, unfeeling, an insensate thing
Was I - until you came.

As a fallow field I waited,
As a tree in winter's cold and cheerless light;
Lacking the quickening spark;
All unaware of the meaning of life
Through aeons of time.
Then you came
Making all things shine.

Anonymous

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(Cont'd. on last page)

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Cline Room

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On an evening like this she was the happiest. Alone, walking by the lake, her dress cascading in the breeze. On the far bank was a light, and she knew he was there. At this late hour he had probably just got up and eaten. He would stay up all night and in the morning she would go over and fix him breakfast. Maybe they would talk. She never knew.

She remembered a morning it was raining. The lake was misty with a swirling fog that wet your face and cooled your lungs. Her dinghy seemed to float in suspension. She found him in a tree, and he said he was looking for Gabriel. He wanted to see him before he blew his horn. "If a dismal day like this isn't the end, then I believe I could survive anything, even death," he said. He was pensive and serious.

Once she asked him why he slept all day and awoke at night. "People can see me during the day. At night I see only myself. The sun hurts my eyes, but the stars don't."

In the afternoon his parents sat in lawn chairs on the lake's bank and drank iced tea and chatted. They were old people. They said, "Very nice of you to come and visit our son. He's a lonely boy." or, "It seems like you're the only one who can talk to him anymore. Strange young man."

"Look at those little-bitty ants," he said excitedly. "Those little things are just goin' to town on that honey! Look at them! Just like they knew what they was doin'." Today he was a child six years old. He had a different character for each year of his life. From eight on down he had the most trouble, because he had not started a diary until he was nine. After a while she drew him away from the ants and childhood, and they walked and threw rocks in the lake.

"Lois, have you ever seen an angel?" he asked.

"No," she kicked at a limb on the ground. "Can't say that I have."

"They have wings, don't they? White ones, that are as smooth as dove wings!"

"Yes, I suppose they do," she nodded.

"They can fly anywhere they want to, even to heaven. Angels are the freest things there are."

"Lucifer was condemned to hell because he did a sin. They are free only if they do God's will."

"Yes, but it's not bad to submit yourself to God," he said.

She sat down on the bank, next to a tree. He was leaning on the tree.

"Where is freedom but in the framework of goodness?" he asked.

"Yes," she agreed. He always "won" their discussions.

"Then . . . , an angel's life is not so bad," he concluded.

"If I've told you once, I've told you twenty times to stay away from that damned idiot across the lake! What the hell do you think he's out there on an island for except that he doesn't kill somebody? My God, he's only out of the asylum because his old man and old lady are so dam' senile they don't realize he's crazy!"

"Now Franklin, you mustn't get excited, dear. You know anger's a fruitless emotion," his wife soothed.

He glared at her, and finished his fourth can of beer. "Now listen, dammit, I ain't harvesting fruit --- I'm telling her to stay away from that demoniac on that island!" He hocked and spat. "Anybody that stands on their head on a rock is bound to be crazy. Got up in the morning and what did I see but that imbecile, inverted on a dam' rock!"

The next morning the dinghy was gone and the speedboat was chained to the dock. She could see him across the lake, standing on the bank, looking at her. He waved and ran, flapping his arms like a bird. For a week he waited and she saw him cupping his hands around his mouth, but it was useless. Behind him were his parents, sitting on the lawn, sipping tea. "Wonder what happened to that nice young lady? Guess she gave up, like the rest. Kinda sad--he liked her."

That night, as she slept, he climbed the sycamore tree by her window. It was raining and he slipped on a wet limb. The fall broke his neck. It rained so hard that it completely ruined the white pasteboard wings tied to his back.

Steve Clinton

THE SONG OF THE CROOK-LEG BIRD

A cod-head for man,
And a stone-blocked cave.
The song of the crook-leg bird,
Barbed, sad and beautiful-
Whose slumbers are not sleep.

Must I? Must I? I must
Follow the song of the crook-leg bird.
Honor lies dead in a stone-blocked cave
And I must be an incubus
To impregnate a cod-headed world
With my own hoarse croak of cold honor.

But let me not turn rancid
And sour in the hate of bird killers,
For the crook-leg bird
Turned spiteful and cruel, yet died
Of fever for man in a Turk-ruled land.

ON DYLAN THOMAS

The wild-haired Welshman cheated the gods.
His life, they said, was to be a mortal nova,
Burning, burning, flashing.... then the dark.

The man lives not, in his cavalcade of bars,
But what he wrote of life, his words of truth,
Burn with a steady flame: a morning star.

And whatever Valhalla dead Welsh poets inhabit
Resounds to the roaring, robust mirth
Of the wild-haired Druid scop.

Herb Fackler
reprinted from the National
College Anthology

THE LAST STAND

It had been dark about an hour, but the heat was still rising from the dingy little streets of the French Quarter. On Bourbon Street the bands were warming up, and the barkers stood by their open doors and called to the early evening crowd. People moved about in little groups. Some hurried, and others just wandered around looking at everything, but none of them noticed the old man. He was big, and his stomach hung over the top of his baggy pants. He wore a weather-beaten, double-breasted suit with a red bow tie and had an old beat-up trumpet case stuck under his arm. Wilson Rose James hadn't always been unnoticed. At one time he had been the King of Bourbon Street. Only then it wasn't Bourbon Street, it was Basin Street, where things were really wild. Back in the old days, King Willie blew his horn and people came from everywhere.

Things had changed now though. Willie had grown old, and he had a bad heart. His kind of jazz had grown old too. Even in New Orleans people said it was too loud and it was ugly. Now they liked it cool and quiet. But as far as Willie was concerned, he was still King Willie, and his kind of jazz was the only kind, and tonight he was going to prove it to everybody.

He left Bourbon, walked about a half a block down St. Peters Street, and stopped in front of a small, run-down building. There was a covered alley beside it which led back to a little court yard. It didn't look like much, but the old timers could get together here and make a little music for anybody who wanted to listen. The rest of the group were already there, tuning up. They had known each other for a long time, off and on, and had played a lot of jazz together.

"Well, looks like all the kats is here," said Willie, taking his horn out of his case. "Whatcha say let's get things started."

There was a kind of silence in the little room. Henry Evans, a tall, thin old man, wrapped his long arms around his bass fiddle and leaned on it. "Willie," he said, "me and the boys here, well, we kinda thought we might kinda take it easy tonight."

Willie looked at him sharply. "Take it easy, hell! We gonna blow da top right off dis place. Don't y'all go worrin' bout me."

They knew then that if they didn't blow the top off the place, Willie would do it by himself. There was nothing more to be said.

They started playing and a few people came in. They came out of curiosity at first, but as the strange, exciting rhythm of that old-style jazz began to drift into the street, more began to come. Before long, the little room was filled. Willie kept blowing his horn, and by the time he got warmed up, the people could hear him clear down on Bourbon Street. They played it fast, and they played it slow, blues and rag-time, and the people kept coming. It was just like the old days again -- King Willie was blowing his horn and the people were flocking in to hear him. At two o'clock in the morning, Willie announced the last number, but everybody clapped and stomped and hollered for more. So it went until almost dawn.

Finally, Willie sat down in his chair and said, "There ain't no more. I'm jest blowed out."

Everybody filed past and shook Willie's hand and clapped him on the back, but Willie never stood up.

When they had all gone, Henry came back inside. Willie still sat in his chair.

"You awright, Willie?"

"I'm fine, Henry." There was a strain in Willie's voice.

"I'm fine as I been in a long time."

"Willie, you ain't lookin so good. I'm gonna go get a doctor."

But when the doctor came, it was too late. Willie had slumped over, his trumpet still clutched in his hands.

The sun was rising now, and the early morning rays cast little dancing shadows on the floor. It was the beginning of a new day, a new day that King Willie wouldn't have to see.

John Braden

A CURRENT THEOLOGICAL CONCERN

Regale me with tales of no tribal Jehovah,
for I have no time for a god
who is bound by a people
or protects one nation
by destroying the gods of its neighbors.

And tell me no legends of Christ's Heavenly Father
who so loved the world that He sent
a prophet from Nazareth
to whisper the secret
that Moslems and Buddhists shall perish in hell.

And put down the lute, for I'll hear no myths
of a God in a flowing white beard,
in the image of man
with two legs and two arms,
enjoying a city of jasper and gold.

A god whose concern
is infinitesimal man
must be, by all counts,
an inferior deity.

So sing of a god who created the universe,
a Power not hindered by space or by time--
by the shape of a human.
Sing of a god who created the stars
and probably spirits far greater than man's.

Dessagene Crawford

YOUTH

It was the season of wind and mist. Cholea shivered, for the autumn wind was blowing crisp and chill, and with each breath she took there came a rasping tartness mingling the mellow fruitfulness of the season with the frosty air. Evening came quickly now, and the remaining afternoon lay bathed in a soft rosy hue. Rays of the setting sun shone through the trees' colored leaves making a dappled pattern on the sidewalk. For an instant the breeze blew, separating the leaves in a swirl of color, distorting the shadow pattern like a scattered jigsaw puzzle. The entire day had the premonition of sensation. It was not tangible, this feeling, but a subtle sharpness provoked it.

Cholea's steps kept a brisk pace until at last, she paused and leaned against an old iron fence, whose ornate grill work was rusted and washed with centuries of use. Behind the gate stood a house. Built during the Victorian period, it stood grandly against the evening sky. Cholea's mouth twitched in what had been the beginning of a smile and ended in an involuntary grimace of pain. Her eyes filled with tears, and through blurred vision she stared at the house as if trying to implant upon her memory all details of the structure. The gate swung open, and Cholea went down the path to the door. She flung her frail limbs against its oak and entered. The room smelled of wood, spice, and mustiness. The mixture was appealing, and again Cholea's mouth formed a half smile. A white kitten sat on the floor before a roaring fireplace drinking milk from a saucer. Its tiny pink tongue lapped at the whiteness, spraying drops on the floor. It finished and sat back, daintily washing its tiny paws. The softness and sweetness of the kitten filled the room. Cholea crossed the room, went to a far window, and surveyed the afternoon. The final glow of sun fell on her thin face making it full and warm, and a glitter on the window-pane made her eyes sparkle. The sky was now a blaze of orange and gray, like the mingled fury of smoke and fire. The room glowed dull as the day ended in a moment, and slowly the sharpness became pain. It came as rain, drop by drop until suddenly it became a thundering din and afterwards . . . clear wet silence . . . almost too still.

Cholea turned and faced the fireplace. On the mantle, a black China horse had begun galloping. It clinked from one end of the mantle and back. Cholea walked slowly to the mantle, hands clenched to her sides. She grabbed the horse, but the dampness from her palms could not hold the glossy china, and the wriggling figurine fell to the floor. The kitten screamed, the horse whinned, and the half smile became a gaping hole as the silence was shattered and the pain became reality. The thin pale face watched the kitten jerk violently and lie still. The soft whiteness was lost in red, for blood ran a trail around broken bits of black china horse. The afternoon was gone, the kitten had died, and as Cholea turned away, she knew. It was time.

Jan Rae Green

THE SONNET

A sonnet is a fetter self-imposed,
So say the wise in well-defined verse;
And lines with regularity composed
Are preferable to metrics more diverse.
A certain concentration is required,
A certain victory of head o'er heart;
And sometimes pattern, though so much admired,
May be the executioner of art.
But still if balance is to be retained,
And foolish nonsense ostracized withall,
The intellect must guide though rhyme be strained,
And feeling in its place be made to fall.
For thus one may by strategem and ruse
Confine at length a wriggling, kicking Muse.

Jerry O'Dell

CINQUAINS

He was
No good, they said,
This boy who scorned...and laughed...
And scoffed while they looked on--He turned
And knelt.

.....

Through him
She found herself.
He brought her love...and hope...
And faith...And while they shared their dreams,
He left.

.....

If only
I can gain these--
Wealth and power and fame--
I will succeed, and I will have
Nothing

Diana Dry

NO RETURNING

To Bill who did not come back from World War II. To Bill who dreamed of driving down Main Street in a big car with a pretty girl after he had served a few years and made some money. To Bill who was at Pearl Harbor when the Japs attacked. To Bill who wrote that while he was standing watch on the darkened deck he had come to know what life was all about. To Bill who went down with that part of the U.S.S. New Orleans that sank after it was hit by a torpedo at Guadalcanal. To Bill who went down strapped to the gun that kept firing.

The bombs fall: the sirens scream.
I know now, I'll not go back.
My lofty hopes, my vivid dreams
Are fading.

All hands on deck: all stations filled
I know it'll be a long one.
My Cadillac, my pretty girl --
No parading.

The Rising Sun on sub and plane,
I know I'll see it closer.
Emblem of hell, emblem of pain,
No escaping.

The darkened deck, the stealthy night,
I know the ocean holds him.
My watch I keep, my knowledge too,
Of awakening.

Some said, "Join up;" some said, "Stay."
I know it doesn't matter.
This was my hope: This was my way
Of arriving.

Six battles down and one out there.
I know it is the biggest.
Torpedo hits; I feel us give.
No staying.

The strap holds tight: my place is sure.
I know I must keep firing.
The flash of light, the listing ship,
The sea enfolding.

Evelyn Todd

THE MERRY MAN

The night is a silent celebration.
Like the sleeping beast dreaming of spring,
Its rapture is a mute jubilation.
In this dream of delight I ran.
I ran until reverie asserted its demand.

I lie on the grass; my joy has gone.
Hollow, I lie face down,
And awake to night's silent sound.
I lie on the grass; my joy has gone,
But yet the night is still not dawn.

Steve Clinton

Paris, Ville Lumière,
Dans sa robe fleurie
La Seine printanière
Sa ceinture jolie.

- Jane Wroten



La nuit devient l'aurore
L'aurore devient le jour
Les jours deviennent des ans
Le Temps mûrit l'Amour.

- Jane Wolfenden



Je vais me promener
Seule dans la forêt
Regarder les beaux arbres
Et les oiseaux du bois.

- Mary Sorrows



Nous sommes au mois de mars
Arrive un coup de vent
Tout le gazon est vert
Des signes du printemps.

- Jeri Riley



SOME FLOWERS FOR BRADLEY

I hadn't really wanted to go to that party. It just seems like they're all the same after a while. You drift in and say a few meaningless things to a few people you know well enough to say anything to, and you have a few drinks, and then, after a reasonable amount of time, you drift out and wonder why in the world you ever went, and what good it all was, and how sad it was the way people pretended to care so much and really cared so little, and then you promise yourself never to go to another one, and then you forget about it until the next party and the next invitation.

Well, like I was saying, I hadn't really wanted to go, and I certainly didn't need to, but I went anyway, and I wish to god I'd just stayed home. I was a little late getting there, but I spoke to the host and mingled in the crowd, speaking to a few familiar faces, smiling at the unfamiliar ones, and feeling pretty uncomfortable and lonely. And then I saw Bradley Coleman.

Bradley and I had been friends and classmates those few years before everyone separated to go to college, and I always liked him because he was a little different from most of us, a little more serious maybe. He was standing off to one side, his arms folded and his head tipped slightly back, gazing at the laughing crowd.

I hesitated a moment, half afraid, half curious, then walked up beside him and said very bravely, "Hello, Bradley."

He turned, broke into a wide smile, and answered, "Well, hi....Golly, I haven't seen you in so long. What's it been? Four years?"

"Five," I answered, "or six. What are you doing now?"

"Oh, working for a publishing firm here in town. And you?"

And so we spent the next few minutes getting reacquainted, trying to fill in enough to feel related again. Then we wandered outside to escape the noisy room and the silence which had come between us.

"You don't have a date," he asked suddenly.

"No, I never do at these things. In fact, I hardly know any of the people here, but I get invited through the firm and always seem to come. I don't know why. It never seems to do anything good for me."

"Yes, I know." He frowned. "I always go away feeling as empty as I did before, but I always seem to come back to the next one, hoping, I guess, it will be different, but it never is. I don't know, it seems like just about everything leaves me feeling empty and sad. I really think I'm crazy sometimes. I mean, just look in there. They're all happy and having fun, and I'll bet not a one of them is wondering what good it all is. It just doesn't seem right that it could mean so little to me and leave me so disgusted, and it doesn't seem right that they should all spend their time never doing anything good for each other." He lowered his eyes, then raised them and said quickly. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get off on anything so boring and crazy."

At that moment, I wanted to say, "Oh, Bradley, you fool, it isn't crazy or boring. It's not that at all. It's -- well, what else is there -- it's everything." But I turned and smiled and heard myself reply, "That's okay, I guess we all feel that way at times."

He turned back for a moment, then stopped and said, almost automatically, "Here, let me get you another drink." He disappeared into the crowd, and that was the last time I ever saw Bradley Coleman.

The morning paper said he apparently fell asleep while driving home, for his car veered off the curving road, smashed through the guard rail, and fell over the fifty-foot embankment before finally coming to rest in the quiet little river.

As I sat there at the breakfast table with the tears streaming down my face, I heard myself ask, "What are you doing? What have you ever done? What good?" And the headlines stared back, "Young Publisher Killed In Auto," and

there was silence. I knew I was waiting, but waiting for what? For nothing? No, for everything...waiting to speak, to care, to give, to live...waiting for everything...for the right time, the time that never comes, the time that may come still. It must come, or there will have been nothing--nothing good, nothing valuable, nothing to fill the emptiness of life. Yes, it will come, it must. Sometime, tomorrow, next week, the time will come when I'll be able to answer the Bradleys, to care about them, to forget myself, to give to them. "Yes, yes," I whispered. "It will come." So I folded the morning paper and picked up the phone to order some flowers for Bradley Coleman. It was the only thing I could think of to do.

Diana Dry

WINTER

Those bare-leaved trees of grays and blacks,
Stand separated by intruding sidewalks and
their own spacing.
They form an almost unfamiliar scene outside
my window,
And make me near forget that I have known
those walks -----
The aimless ends to which they lead
With stubborn claim to sure direction.
They lose their strangeness, as the trees their aura
of aloofness,
And pretense is no good
Except from out a window
Where I can find a picture framed by panes.

Sharon Hubert

THE PARK

"You know, America is a great place to live in. Yes, I know that all the time you hear people talk about the government taking over things, or people not having rights in places, but I never have seen that that is bad like they say it is. I never have had a lot of education in schools or things like that, but I am smart enough to know that no other place in the world's got freedom like we have here. I mean, look at me. Of course I don't do much at all but bum around working here and there, just enough to buy me beans and cigarettes once in a while. The thing is to just be a law-abiding citizen, and have a little change in your pocket, and you can sit in a park like this all day.

"It's funny that you ask me that, about sleeping, I mean. I say it's funny because people always ask me like, 'Well what happens when you get too tired and don't have a place?' What I do is just unwrap my bundle out of the way of any cops, and I sleep. It's not much harder when the weather is bad. People always shake their heads, but I don't mind since I know they just aren't used to ideas like that.

"Do you remember a minute ago when I was telling you about the characters? You know, about the guys you run into when you wander around? Well, this park and asking about sleeping makes me remember something funny that happened in another park about like this a week ago, or was it two weeks ago? Anyway, this something funny that happened; not funny ha-ha, but funny like the crazy way people are, if you know what I mean, but let me go on. I was going to the other side of this town so I could get on the route south. I'm trying to get down to Florida now, you know, sunshine. But anyway, I had just had a ham sandwich and I was feeling full and a little sleepy. It was about one in the afternoon and I was walking by a park. Well, I looked

around and didn't see anybody looking at me, so I just walked over on the other side of these bushes into the park. It was just like I wanted. There was this bench by the cinder path with bushes around it and sort of hanging over by the back of it. Just the right kind of place for a guy to grab a few minutes of sleep, so I unhitched my bundle a little back of the bench and wrapped up for a nap.

"Now look, stop smiling like that, I told you it's just in the way you look at the thing.

"But there I was in this nice park, back out of the way and bothering nobody. I don't know how long I had been there, a half hour, forty-five minutes or so, when some people woke me up. I could see a kid's face as he was sitting down on the bench. What woke me up was this other guy who was already sitting there. He had said 'Good afternoon' to the young man. This kid had blond hair and was nice looking. He seemed about six feet tall and maybe played football for some high school or college. It made me feel good to see him because he looked so average and American or something. Now I couldn't see this other guy because he had already sat down, but I could see part of his coat through the slats of the bench about five feet away.

"Now you are smiling again. All I want to say is that you do get some pretty funny views of things when you wander around like this.

"Like I was saying, I could see that the older guy, I know he was older because I could see between the slats how he was sitting there and you know how a guy gets when he gets a little older. Anyway he had on a brown suit and brown shoes. The younger man had on some tan colored Levis with white sneakers and thick white socks. I'm telling you this because somehow it makes it all seem more natural. I mean I was all set to hear them talk about apple pie or something so I could get back to sleep. Sure enough they started off about the weather, and how nice the park was,

and how glad they were the city had a peaceful place to rest and get away from things. But in a minute I noticed something. You know, after you have talked to people and you get a little smarter you can tell something about people just by the way they talk about the weather and things in general. But it all seemed like the man was feeling out the kid's mind on things people call liberal ideas, or humanitarian ideas, or sometimes Red ideas. The young guy agreed that a lot was wrong in the world, and in our country. They agreed that people in America didn't give other citizens a square deal and other things like that that people often talk about. There was a feeling between them I once heard a guy call "esprit de corps"; I forgot to say that my memory is pretty good. But then everything seemed nice and in order there in the park. I was resting and feeling pretty good that everybody was friendly, although I had a funny voice trying to tell me something in the back of my mind all this time. They sort of ran out of talk and things came to a stop, and there we were. Then it came all of a sudden, and I knew what the voice had been trying to tell me. The brown suit said 'I'm not going to make a pass at you, but I am a homosexual.' Things hung for a second like they do just before you are about to see a bad wreck, or something else very bad is about to happen. Things were still, and another feeling was between them, and I could even feel it back where I was. The man in the brown suit knew he had made a mistake. The young guy didn't say anything, but sort of drew in his arms and hunched over and put down his head. I saw his feet come together and he pushed them a little back under the bench. The brown suit started talking again. Everything was gone and there was nothing except a nervous feeling. The talk was much faster. 'I knew you were liberal so that is the only reason I said anything,' the older man said. 'You don't know how things are when you are in my position. We have to be careful, or we get into a lot of

trouble. Nobody knows what it's like, and even the police hate us sometimes! The young guy didn't say anything but just bent a little lower, and I could see his shirt pulling tighter against his back. 'Nobody knows what it's like. None of us wouldn't go straight if he had the chance, but nothing goes for us. Most of us do our best to be like everyone else. We live good lives, we don't bother anyone, but no one outside knows what it's like. I don't know anyone -- none of my friends is ever happy.' The brown suit was shaking, all the time his voices became more like a whisper, and faster, because he knew, and I think I knew what was coming. 'You don't take offense, do you?' The younger man didn't say anything and suddenly jumped up. I saw his face for a second. It was red, and he looked half-way between fear and hate. He stood there; I watched their feet. Then the white canvas feet moved. The sound was like when you hit your fist in your hand as hard as you can. That and a half cry and moan came from the brown suit. His knees bent, and his hands hung at his sides like he was just taking something he deserved. The tennis shoes stood there and the beating went on for a few seconds. Like it came it stopped. The kid jumped back, and the man in the brown suit fell into the cinders on his face....He jerked and rolled over and the blood and cinders made a black mark from his mouth back around the side of his face. Then I looked and saw the white shoes, and tan Levis running down the path and out of the park.

"But like I was saying, when you are like I am you get to know how funny people are, but you also know that you have to just look at things and think about them, but you can't do anything. That's the way it is."

Jimmy Henderson

REALIZATION

I am young. Before me
my life unfolds, a bright
untarnished road stretching
into a blissful, green
eternity of life,
youth, and joy unending.

I brazenly tell myself
that I am forever
young; that Time and Age can
never leave their stamp upon
my face; that Death will come
and take with him all living things -- but me.

I laugh aloud, but as I laugh
I shiver as a sudden shadow
darts across the sun.
It disappears, and I think that
I have forgotten Death;
Think foolishly that Death has forgotten me.

But Death does not forget.
A church bell tolling in the silence
of mourning;
A flag fluttering, listless at half-mast;
A last sun-blistered leaf spiralling down
before a winter wind--
And Death stands beside me.

Then--then within the stillness of my
inmost self--I KNOW.

Diana Laney

SALES SLIP

Over to the right of the counter was a sign that said, "Return merchandise here for refunds." A long line of people was waiting; most of them had brought something defective or something that didn't fit just right. One lady was returning a big cuckoo clock made in Germany. She had dropped the clock last night, but maybe she thought it wouldn't have run anyway, because she never told the salesclerk about dropping it. Well, behind her was a boy about fourteen years old. He'd been looking for the refund merchandise counter for twenty minutes now. The department store was one of these four story monsters--ladies shoes, fourth floor; men's hats, third; and business offices, second. It wasn't easy to find something; even the elevators were hidden. Anyway, after five or ten minutes the lady with the cuckoo clock convinced someone on the other side of the counter that she deserved a refund. It took her awhile and a lot of talking, but she did it. The youngster next in line was now in full view of the salesclerk.

"Uh, la-lady, this shirt has a hole in it. What'll I do?"

A little disappointed in her transaction over the cuckoo clock, the clerk was quite prepared for this customer. She looked first at the boy, then at the shirt, and then back at the boy. And she didn't just look, she stared right through him. He thought maybe she looked like that because she suspected he'd torn it. Anyway, he felt pretty ridiculous just standing there with a torn green plaid shirt. He didn't even like the shirt--it wasn't his idea. Mother picked out his clothes.

"Young man, if you want to return anything, you must have a sales slip. I really do wish people would understand there are certain rules to follow here." She kept tapping her fingers on the counter in some sort of rhythm and looking at him with big green eyes. This salesclerk was picked from over thirty applicants. Her form said she was unusually talented in public relations techniques.

The boy was scared to death though; he couldn't remember where he'd left the sales slip or even what it looked like. He stood there awhile, nervously shifting his weight from one foot to the other. "Ma'am, I think I've lost it. I mean, maybe I misplaced it or something."

Well, I'm sorry, dear. You see, it's the policy. Why don't you find the slip and then come back."

Without looking up, the young boy picked up his shirt and walked away. At that moment he hated the woman. Somehow people enjoyed making him feel small and insignificant. He knew they did. The strange thing was that whenever he was with people, he never knew quite what to say or how to say it. No one gave him much of a chance though, he figured.

"Say, son, you drop that shirt?"

"What?"

"I said, is that your shirt?"

"I guess it is, thanks."

"My gosh, can't you youngsters keep up with anything?"

He thought about how stupid he was--actually ruined everything he'd ever tried. Like building model airplanes, for instance. Once he was given this B-72 kit for Christmas. It was probably expensive, because his mother made such a fuss over it. She said it was beautiful and not one of those cheap sets you get in the dime stores. He wanted to build this one well, especially to impress Mom. He used too much glue though; it leaked out of the cracks and spread unevenly over the wings. Well, his mother remembered that incident for about two weeks, and every now and then she reminded him that he should have followed the directions and that anyone could have done better than that, even without directions. He threw the plane away.

"Going down, sir--first floor."

"Oh, yeah--thanks." He rode the elevator down and passed through ladies wigs, men's sports wear, and some counter marked " $\frac{1}{2}$ Price--Chance of a Lifetime Bargains." It felt good to be outside. He didn't really have any place to go for ten or fifteen minutes....That was when mother was coming to pick him up.

"Oh Lord! She'll really flip when I tell her I lost the sales slip." He wasn't exactly scared or anything--after all, anyone can lose a thin piece of paper. But when he tried to say something like, "Mom, I lost the sales slip," or "Gee, Pop, that's not the whole story; there's more to it," nobody listened. He knew he did many clumsy, stupid things. Sometimes he didn't think at all. "But they don't give you time to tell them what you're doing, or why, or even to figure it out for yourself."

"Well, son, what are you doing out here talking to yourself in the street? People don't go around mumbling like that. But--what's this--I told you to return this shirt."

"Mom..."

"You've been here twenty minutes already..That ought to be enough time."

"Mom, I--I guess I forgot the sales slip."

"You what?"

"Well, yes, I did. I don't know. Maybe I lost it..."

"Son, couldn't you remember even that? You hardly do anything right anymore. A sales slip--a simple sales slip." She couldn't understand the tall one hundred and forty-five pounds that had awkwardly made excuses about a sales slip. It wasn't that he was terrible or anything--she knew that--but too often he was irresponsible and silly. She wondered if she had failed to teach him well or prepare him for life.

"You're fourteen now. Don't you think I should expect you to accomplish something once in a while? He kept listening to her until they had reached the car.

On the way home they passed a barber shop, and Mother reminded him that he needed a hair cut. "You ought to realize you don't look good in long hair."

But he liked his hair long; and he wasn't listening too well by now, anyway. He was thinking about Ralph Paul, one of the most popular boys at school. Ralph could talk to people easily. Even when he had a lot to say, people listened to him. And Ralph probably never lost a sales slip in his entire life.

Corliss Parker

MORPHEAN ODE

I am Computer Card 3698704
With eight arrow-shaped notches in my side.
I stand in line behind forty
Ahead of forty
Waiting for supper, in a compartmented plate.

But in my dreams I ride a swift, milk-white frog,
And my red-gold hair flows behind.
Before is my opal castle
With real beams of solid oak
And a thousand leather-bound volumes
Which I need not read
For

I
Know.

Still must I, waking, be Computer Card 3698704
With eight arrow-shaped notches in my side.

Herb Fackler

CHANGE

Blow, North Wind, blow,
Cover the ground with your white snow.
Send the animals homeward bound
As the last leaves fall to the ground.
Let the squirrels scurrying cease
As they gather the last storage for their rests
In the trees.
Let the tall pines whisper and murmur;
Winter has come; gone is the summer.
And the deer so free and tall
Rush deep to the woods at the Northern call.
Send the late birds on their homeward flight
Before the day turns to cold night.
Send the farmers back to the fields
To gather the last of the summer's yield.
Blow into everything a different attitude
For today the earth is bare, but its warmth
Feels good.
Blow North Wind, blow,
For tomorrow the earth will be silent, cold,
And covered with snow.

Indi Nichols

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INSIGHTS

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The current situation is characterized by a complex interplay of factors, including economic challenges, social inequalities, and environmental concerns. These factors are interconnected and influence each other, creating a multifaceted landscape that requires a holistic approach for effective management and policy-making. Understanding the underlying causes and dynamics of these issues is crucial for developing sustainable solutions that address the needs of all stakeholders and ensure long-term stability and growth.

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SOMETHING FINAL

Dr. Thomas's coffee tasted flat and stale. He blamed, in the back of his mind, the diabetic on the fourth floor who had demanded attention just as he had sat down, but his medical integrity would not allow such a thought to become manifest. He was aware only of a feeling of acute disappointment. He did not really understand why he snapped at nurse Martha Simons, either, when she came in to join him and asked the reason for his sullen expression. He did not particularly like Mrs. Simons, even though she was a very competent nurse. It was always difficult to forget that she was a widow, childless, whose whole life centered around her work at the hospital. There was also the fact that she was no longer young and could have only a few years of useful work ahead of her. But perhaps the most disturbing thing about her was her refusal to complain. Dr. Thomas was extremely uncomfortable in the presence of silent sufferers. He avoided looking at her, turning his gaze instead out the window of the little supply room where he sat and muttering something about the coffee. When she offered to bring him a fresh cup, along with one for herself, he very curtly left the room, leaving her alone to draw whatever conclusions she might from his rudeness.

Nurse Simons had worked with doctors for a long time. White coats and authoritarian manners no longer impressed her. She sat down at the small table where the doctor had left his cup and took her turn at the window. Through the partially-frosted pane she peered into the bleak December night. A damp snow was falling on the drive which led around one wing of the building to an emergency ambulance entrance in the rear. The hospital was located on a slope from which the surrounding city was visible. Martha Simons was fond of the view, but at such a late hour only a few sparse lights were discernible through the flake-thickened air. A sudden burst of wind blew a dead leaf, huge and brown, against the glass and held it there for a brief moment. Martha stared in inexplicable fright at the dried and crumpled thing as it slid, scraping, across the pane. She imagined for a split second that it was trying to get in. Then she remembered with something like relief that she had an injection to give.

Dr. Thomas was walking the halls, irritated by his own lack of direction. He hated night duty, especially, strange as it may sound, the quiet nights. He preferred to have both his hands and his mind fully occupied. Otherwise the immense

enclosed darkness of the huge old building had an oppressive effect on him. He would think of the dim corridors, and the lonely floor nurses at their desks in tiny pools of light, of the dull throbbing of unseen machinery, and most of all the scores of sleeping patients who filled innumerable dark bedrooms with the sound of their breathing. This always led him to individual cases. There was, for example, old Mr. Zecharias (or was it Zeharias) who had been brought in off the street by some passer-by. Pneumonia. He was now resting quietly, living on oxygen, glucose, and powerful drugs, but it was a simple matter of time.

The doctor found himself at the door of the hospital's sun deck. It was of course unused during the winter, but when he tried the door he found it unlocked. Feeling suddenly an urge to smoke, he stepped out into the cold. A metal awning served to shield him from the snow, but the wind made him shudder. The cigarette was as unsatisfying as the coffee had been earlier. He tossed it away and looked out over the rooftops. It was an old city, with buildings blackened by the smoke of factories, and in the gloom, under the low sky, it looked sad and desolate. Dr. Thomas remembered some statistics from the newspaper which said the population was, percentage-wise, growing older. He did not need a census report to tell him this. It was evident on every street corner. He looked down at his own hands. They were as yet unwrinkled, but he was a keen enough observer of his own health to detect the small signs in the blood pressure, the muscles, the respiration. He thought of Mr. Zecharias and of Mrs. Simons, and then of all the other patients, doctors, nurses, janitors, cooks, and scrub women who labored day after day in the great edifice behind him. All, he thought, stages of decomposition. He extended the generalization to include the inhabitants of all the houses he could see below who would, at dawn, resume their weary lives. They would trudge through the dirty snow to odious jobs, waste one more day in joyless effort. and return home at evening desiring only the anodyne of sleep for their barren spirits. Dr. Thomas stepped back into the warm hall and closed the door, only then realizing how very cold he had become.

* * * * *

It was around midnight when the ambulance arrived. The doctor was summoned by nurse Simons, who led him to the brightly-lit emergency room where the patient lay. It was a woman of about thirty-eight or nine, in labor. Her husband,

who sat beside the bed, looked up anxiously as the doctor entered. They were obviously poor, and the doctor found himself involuntarily sizing them up. He doubted that they pay what the hospital normally charged for a birth, but then there was nothing to be done. The woman was having a good deal of pain. From the husband he learned their name, which he quickly forgot, and that this would be their first child. They lived in another town and knew no one in the city. The baby was not due for another three weeks. Dr. Thomas reassured the man as best he could and suggested he make use of a nearby waiting room. He then began his scrub procedures while several nurses prepared the woman for delivery.

As Dr. Thomas bent over the white sink in the dressing room a strange feeling came over him. He was in the habit of viewing his patients with what approached complete objectivity. It was a sort of safety precaution which through long practice had become habitual. He had even been accused on occasion of callousness, a criticism which he did not find particularly disturbing. He had developed an attitude toward patients which served well and was, he thought, universally applicable. One could not, after all, allow oneself to be concerned. A doctor did his best of course in every case, but there was a strict rule with him about attaching significance or even desiring a specific outcome. One could function better under a philosophy of (beyond a certain point) what is to be will be. Dr. Thomas did not know why he was recounting all this to himself at this particular moment. It had become so much a part of him that he seldom felt the need of preaching to himself. He reflected. What was it about this case? He had never seen either of these people before. They were frightened, but he had seen fear. They were poor, but he had seen poverty. They were having a child—. This, he was certain, had something to do with it, thought he could not say exactly what. It was related somehow to the bleakness of the night, and his encounter with Martha Simons earlier, and his thoughts on the empty sun deck, and even with old Mr. Zecharias and the diabetic. As he re-entered the room where the woman lay, already under anesthetic, he was met by nurse Simons. Her eyes caught his momentarily over the surgical mask and he had the distinct impression that she knew precisely what he had been thinking in the washroom. Likewise, he detected in her expression those very same sentiments. For both of them this night had suddenly become alive with expectancy.

Outside the snow had stopped and the sky had partially cleared. A few stars were visible. The smoke-darkened city seemed to assume an air of anticipation. Unaware in their houses the people waited, and dreamed, and hoped. Here and there someone awoke with a sensation of unaccountable excitement, and then, puzzled, turned in his bed and tried to go back to sleep. In the hospital the patients waited, asleep or half awake, unconscious or in delirium. Mr. Zecharias waited in his chamber of imminent death. Nurses waited at their posts, glancing nervously at their watches and wishing the night would end. Dr. Thomas, Martha Simons, and the other nurses plied their skills with painstaking care and extraordinary emotional energy. The woman on the table slept the abysmal sleep of anesthesia while the man in the waiting room wiped anxious sweat from his forehead.

At one forty-two the woman was delivered of a stillborn male infant. Outside, across the rooftops and in the lightless streets, the snow was falling.

-J. O'Dell

AN END

We played and walked together
exchanged our faces in tender caresses
Hopscotch on Sunday
(unwilling breaths of dust in our lungs
caught up in our grins)

Now from water oaks they hang
so green in summer. . . so red in autumn
Mashed underfoot
their blood sustains the green grass and
runs to the sea in rills

After the day of our death we are with them
to hang and sustain and
run to the sea in rills.

-Steve Clinton

"I love to kiss you, Ann," he said,
"Do you love to kiss me, too?"
"I kiss to love you, Bob—" she said,
"So I guess I'm not for you."

-Anonymous

Why does the Countess fly?

Because her skirts billow with the gusty
wind
To only become more puffed and full
With the pull of the string that draws
the ends together,
Tapers the ends and fights the fullness
That whirls and swells
And rises like a great balloon?

Repetition in her flight
Too pliable to pause
To be confined
Or smothered
Or whisked away.

No sighs but a swish
That returns with its surge
Forever upward and out
Beyond and above.

Above.
Above and beyond a Countess flies,
And no one knows why.



TRANSITION

I ran so hard down the beach that by the time I reached the unpopulous, desolate sands the air rushing into my lungs burned like fire and my skin was dry and chapped. Attempting to catch my breath, I then walked quickly for about a mile or so as angry thoughts raced through my mind.

"Would you care to sit down for a minute?"

Startled, I turned and glared resentfully at the man, old, withered, and gray, who was seated on a crude piece of driftwood. I was tired; and I sat down.

"Who are you?" I asked in what I hoped was a belligerent manner.

He glanced at me briefly, saying, "Most people call me a lazy old beach bum because I like to sit here and look out at the ocean. And what, may I ask, are you doing in this 'lonely' spot?"

Infuriated by the man's smile, I blurted, "I came here to get away from everything. I'm sick of the whole damn world and everyone in it! I hate it!"

"That's rather difficult to believe," replied the old beachcomber. Then, speaking slowly, he added, "Think of this: if you did not love the world, how could you hate it?"

I hesitated, groping for words. "But the things you love always hurt you, and you feel even worse when you hurt them. So love always turns to hate and bitterness! What protection is there against pain but hate?"

After a long, silent moment during which my face turned scarlet as I realized what I was telling this stranger, his face turned seaward and he pointed to a hermit crab crawling along the wet sand left by the ebb tide.

"Look at that ridiculous animal; He's really a perfectly fine crab, but he goes around in the thick armor of a discarded shell because he's so sensitive. Takes a big effort for that little guy to carry that shell on his back all the time, and he doesn't fool himself. I mean, you knock that animal around and figure he's so protected you can't hurt him so you don't watch out for him, but inside he can feel the pain. And the poor hermit crab can't even look out at the constant beauty of the world when he's feeling bad."

As the man finished talking, he rose and left, receding until his stooped figure was an almost unrecognizable speck on the horizon. I remained motionless, trying to understand all

the strange man told me. As time passed, I also began to wonder if he had really been next to me at all, or if his voice was an illusion created by the wave's roar.

The sand grew cool under me, so I rose and walked back to civilization. The setting sun was an orange glow, and the sea breeze that had started whistled a cold, foamy wave over my feet.

-Jim Hudson

RESPONSE

Touch a leaf—; it shivers
Your fingertips make ripples in the pool.
Words from your lips fall and nestle gently in hearts
Where they are warmly embraced.

You leave behind your footsteps—
Used as patterns by those who follow;
As tokens by some who wish to remember;
As echoes by others who cannot forget.

The mist before your pathway is a vacuum
Waiting only to be filled by your presence.
Everywhere you have been, you are, you will be,
Is the intimate touch and lingering response.

But I am made that when you touch me,
My petals close.
My crystal shatters from the sound
Which is to others the softest of carresses;
Not because there is a difference—;
Because it is the same.

-Lynn Taylor

Les lettres amoureuses
par; roy dupuy

"la Solitude"

Raphael, mon amour;

Ah, que les nuits soient intolérables. Que la vie soit encerclée vaniteusement. Tes mots, mon cher Raphael, sont le moment de ton retour; ils sont le touchement même de ton souci. La douceur de ton amour, Raphael, me met en d'hors de moi, cet amour que j'espère fidèlement. Retourne à la hâte, mon ange, à ton amante. Raphael, je t'aime dans ton absence éternel, même ta présence si chère. Je t'aime, Raphael, toujours.

Louise.

"la Passion"

Ah, cher Raphael;

Toujours le soleil se lève, mais la solitude me reste. Nous ne sommes pas encore dans notre embarrasement. Les jours sont plus longs. Je t'attends cesse. Sois avec moi même dans tes rêves si tu m'aimes toujours. Il me semble qu'il y a une éternité que je t'ai vue. Pardonne-moi mon cher, la situation dont je suis coupable. Sans tes rêves, tiens ce qui soit cher à tes sentiments; je prie qu'ils soient de mon amour. Ah Raphael, je t'aime, je t'aime. Quelquefois je me réveille cherchant à tâtons une être invisible, le sujet de mes rêves, toujours essayant de toucher. Je pense à toi de plus en plus. Ah, comme la vie devient douce, comme mon cœur est endurant d'avoir connaissance de ton amour. L'amour t'attend, cher Raphael. Raphael, je t'aime. Mon cœur est ma vie, et tu es dans mon cœur. Nous serons ensemble et nous trouverons ensemble notre vie propre. Raphael, tiens bon mon amour et donne-moi toujours le tien.

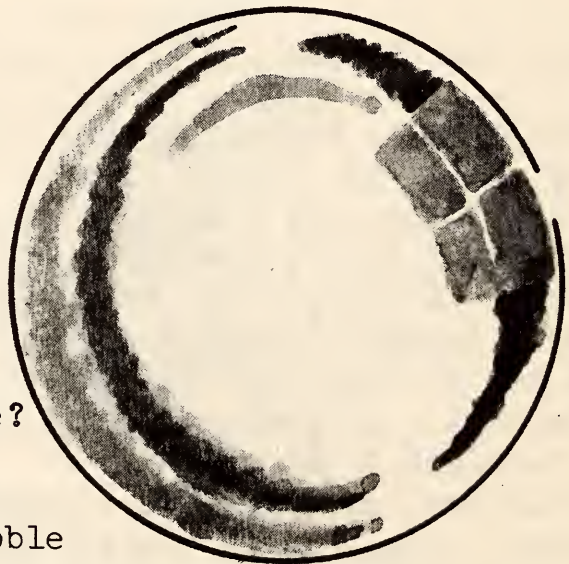
-Louise.

"l'Angoisse"

Raphael, mon coeur;

Je meurs. J'ai le coeur percé. La nouvelle m'a rendue douloureusement affligée. Mon coeur est lourd. Tes mots ne seront jamais encore entendus, tes lèvres douces jamais touchés. Un jour, je t'verrai, je serai avec toi, et je t'aimerai encore. Je ne peux que me souvenir du temps passé. Mon cher Raphael, je meurs. C'est l'esprit de mon amour jamais de me souvenir de la vie sans penser à jamais de trahir mon coeur qui t'aime. Cette lettre que j'ai reçue aujourd'hui m'enlève mes rêves de ton amour. Tout ce que je suis c'est à Louise. Adieu mon amour. Qu'est-ce qui me reste de cet amour perdu? Rien. Alors, il faut que je meure. Adieu mon amour. Quoique l'éternité soit aussi prolongée que demain, l'espoir demeurera et l'amour sera le nôtre. Je crois en mon amour, mais je ne le trouverai qu'en éternité. Adieu mon cher Raphael.

Louise



Early or Late?

In my room at one o'clock a. m.
i float in a transparent bubble
my eyes are wide under the sterile light of my desk
i am opalescent

a window is installed
in my opaline walls
but my eyes
my opaline eyes.

-Steve Clinton

TOMORROW—THE END OR THE BEGINNING?

In his essay "The Island of the Present," Richard Schickel, a young intellectual of the 50's, accused his generation of trying to ignore the present by concentrating on present matters. In this following decade of the 60's, Americans are even more feverishly practicing the same "head-in-the-sand" tactics. Today as world situations become more tangled and the safe present slips further into the past, the nation's people are more frantically resorting to diversions of the present. They are playing more golf, flocking to more night clubs, smoking more cigarettes, and drinking more liquor. After a disturbing newscast about such situations as the Cuban crisis or trouble in Laos, many of them prefer to relax by cranking the power-mower or cruising in the Ford. Always, though, behind the gay laughter and highball flicker tension and vague uneasiness. One comes to wonder whether the island of the present is a safe place to be. He asks himself also exactly what it is in the future that men fear.

Most Americans charge their anxiety about the future to threats of atomic war, of communist domination, and of internal crises. Few probe further, and few realize that these are only surface troubles. Behind these dangers stand men themselves as the cause. These threats are born somewhere in the natures of men. Of course, men today are still very much as they have always been—mixtures of both good and evil. What has changed is their capacity for doing good or evil and the degree to which they feel the effects of their actions.

In modern times men are gaining unlimited powers to bring about good. With their advanced knowledge they may farm the deserts and oceans, develop a world television network, journey to the moon, or conquer heart disease and cancer. On the other hand, men also possess unlimited powers for evil objectives. They may wreak complete destruction on their enemies with bombs or death-rays. The question of the future, then, is whether men will apply their learning to peaceful accomplishments or whether they will use it in contest against each other. More specifically it is a question of whether men choose to serve good or evil ends. Whatever the answer, it carries with itself a definite

verdict for humanity. If they devote themselves to good, men can expect to reach new heights in spiritual, intellectual, and economic development. If they pursue evil objectives, however, they proclaim their own doom. Even today nations cannot come against each other using full force without assuring mutual destruction. It is no longer safe to be greedy and selfish. The turbulent modern world is fast crowding out hate, prejudice, and ignorance. In effect, the future is issuing an ultimatum to all men: they must learn to live together or they cannot live at all.

Time and again the great voices of the age echo this chilling reality. In his recent Birmingham crusade Billy Graham pinpointed the issue:

We are now beginning to realize that something is desperately wrong with human nature. The most burning question of our times is the problem of man.

Albert Einstein was among the great men who believe mankind is engaged in a hopeless struggle in this respect. His televised address in 1950 was his swan song for the human race:

The arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, initiated originally as a preventive measure, assumes hysterical proportions. On both sides, means of mass destruction are being perfected with feverish haste and behind walls of secrecy. And now the public has been advised that the production of the hydrogen bomb is the new goal which will probably be accomplished. An accelerated development toward this end has been solemnly proclaimed by the President. If these efforts should prove successful, radioactive poisoning of the atmosphere and, hence, annihilation of all life on earth will have been brought within the range of what is technically possible. The weird aspect of this development lies in its apparently inexorable character. Each step appears as the inevitable consequence of the one that went before.

And at the end, looming ever clearer, lies general annihilation.

Other authorities, however, take a more optimistic viewpoint. They say that there will be no nuclear war, that men will fully realize their danger and properly control themselves. They predict that the trying times will demand the best from men. There will be a new surge toward humanism. Men will reach new heights in the arts, letters, and sciences and will enjoy even greater material prosperity. One such optimist is Professor John Rader Platt. In his recent article in Horizon Magazine, Professor Platt says that the intense need for brain power will cause intelligence to soar in America. Ordinarily, men with 190 I. Q.'s appear only every half century, but Professor Platt believes a dozen such men may emerge in the next twenty years.

Under no circumstances should a view of the staggering trials ahead lull Americans into settling down to enjoy their easy circumstances. Clinging to the fast-sinking island of the present is hardly a proper way to prepare for this challenging future. On the contrary, such prospects demand a marshaling of spiritual and intellectual forces unparalleled in history. Perhaps all Americans should have more faith in man's goodness and ability. At least in the face of this supreme test, they can try to maintain their dignity. If nothing else, they can await the outcome with sensible calmness. After all, they have the satisfaction of witnessing what is either the last chapter in man's history or else only his real beginning.

-Jim Burson

Dreams:

Meaningless wanderings? Perhaps—

Void of depth

and sense?

Insignificant?

Dreams:

Unconscious reality? Perhaps—

Filled with suggestion

and truth?

Allusive?

-Rick Hruska

SYMPHONY AND LAMENT FOR THREE HEROES

- I. Formic son of Myrmidons
Sea-drenched and styx-dipped,
Man of godly beauty, sun from the womb of dawn,
Hero of all the legions of the Greek.

One must live, an heir to Peleus
One with the blood of fire
And sun-soul rising out of blackness.
One with an arm of iron, a heel of flesh.

Why did the woman choose the sword?
Bright-edged, keen and cold.
Androgen flows among veils of silk;
He will be made known to us.

By crematory light did he don his chiton
And met the midnight Hector in the day.
Seven times the city round as the red
Sun glared from the sky with bitter fury.

So must he die by heel, unhealed by death.
A brief flame and a bright one.
Pyre-tongues lick the low-bosomed clouds
As the sun dies in its turn.

- II. Distant from the shadowed Strong-fort walls
Lay the child upon the hill to die.
Child of dragons, son of kings,
Brought to life and light by darkness.

From the bladed rock to Tintagel and
Camelot; fair the queen's white hand
That gave a table, round like earth-
Fertile field of flowering gentillesse.

Starving children feed fatly
Upon the meat of the Boar
And spring comes again; a kindly spring,
O'er the corpse of the Cat o' Losanne.

The sun blazed twelvely as the invaders came,
Rough barbarians with a rude sort of speech.
Each fled Excalibur's whirling white wrath.
And the sun smiled on Cornwall's great King.

At sunset the barge floated out to the sea,
Avalon-led by Fate's mothers three.
Rise again, King, and show us your light?
And the sun lies quenched in the void.

III. The People. Throat-cutters. The proud Ones.
Killers of men. Knights of the plains.
A son in the ditches of glory and death,
Repaid by a coin and a ribbon.

One on the mountain, his feathers and scalps
Now a pack, a grenade, and some cheap G. I. boots;
With his eyes burning red and a roar in his ears.
A warrior, a son of the Sioux.

Push up the flag! Count it a feather.
Get you a medal, go back to the land.
Reservation- no job- just the numbers,
Or a heist in a new filling station.

Dreaming of glory with a skin-full of wine;
Sleep off the sick in a ditch.
We'll bury you straight, with a flag on your chest,
When we thaw out your dead hero's corpse.

And so we die, the brave and the high,
With a stubble of beard on our chins,
While the sun hides bleak eyes in tear-laden clouds.
And the light-bulb is casually flicked off.

-Herb Fackler

A LITTLE CLOD

Little Miss Minute debated with herself before the Director's door. She was small and round-faced, with stiff straw-colored hair that was close-cut and tightly curled against her pale scalp. She was definitely a woman, with a bust and hips of slightly greater proportions than her waist, but she was—stubby. Her fingers were stubby, her head was stubby, Her legs were chunky and fat. There was a tight compactness about her whole self. Her neck was short, the calves of her legs were well-, but thickly-, formed. Her arms looked dwarfish, and so did the rest of her. She was, in a word, short. And covered with freckles. They swarmed like bees over her arms. They were sifted on her legs and sprinkled in her face. They covered her eyes when she blinked, when her face was one spattered skin. They permeated her very being, encroaching upon her little mouth and fatty nostrils. You wondered if they bothered her breathing, if they extended down her throat. Her lips were discernable, but faded, barely a shade different from her freckles—not darker, just different, less red. They were a bloodless hue, the cast of an uncooked pure pork pallor. The whites of her eyes were not white, they were pallid. The irises were weakish blue. She was, in fact, unattractive. So obviously so that no one would think of saying it. She was one of many extremes in a crowd. She was—one of them.

And she knew all these things and cowed on the edge of indecision, debating whether to present herself before the Director—or go away. He was her supervisor, the man who ruled her, the man whom she worshipped most among the trousered kind, the man to whom she would gladly have given herself, except. . . except. . . .

He was adored by all. They were the white-plumed flock that padded primly down long polished halls, and back up, and down, and back and forth, up and down, forever. They carried metal trays with rattling cups in ice-cold flints before their warm white breathing bosoms. Of course Edna was one of them too. (Her first name was Edna.) But what in the world could compare with those moving beings, those smiling alive-colored faces with lips and dark eyes? She declared she believed they were supremely attractive. They

were immaculate, as, in appetizing white, the delicious faces floated down waxen corridors toward the Director.

Toward the hub of the universe. That rock! That tall . . . strong . . . dark . . . handsome . . . that prodigious forelock, manly clustering. . . that breadth of hidden forehead! She fondled the wall: thumping thumbs along the woodwork.

The Director chose just this moment to fling open the door, and loom—a vast sluggard bulk—above the throes of her quickening palpitations. "Why Miss Minute. . . Edna," he said mildly—vigorously—in deep oxen tones.

With a jerk and a blur, she clinched her little fists behind her blushing rump, and tried with all her might to fade into invisible nothingness, to dissipate along the shining floor, to rise with the heat. Her round face became pressurized like a balloon. She saw across a far veined pulsing thickness the broad inquiring coals of his yawning slack-lidded eyes. She struggled gaspingly to speak. Presently she heard her voice, faraway, half-drowned, beyond the spray of sudden waves that broke upon wide sands between her freckled ears. "It's about Mr. Nuckles in room 313," she said. Oh, pudgy! pudgy! she thought in the midst of bursting froth.

The Director nodded his heavy head, and massaged his ragged brows—thoughtfully, with careful kneading. He stepped ponderously out upon the quaking tiles and stood in a heap, saying slowly in rumbling tones, "Yes . . . yes . . . schizoid. . . yes. . . yes. . . ! Yes?" He bathed her in a lax gaze.

The sea swarmed around her. "He—he—" she faltered under the frowning flood. It thundered down upon her, hammering her into the sand, beating her into the size and shape of a clam, sputtering around her ears, taking her breath. For an instant, she glimpsed the green depths and the lank fingers of wan seaweed as she puffed her cheeks. Then the ocean recoiled, dying into sliding ripples around her feet. She steadied herself. "He—he-wants-to-see-you. He-wants-to-see-you-about-his-Napoleon-jacket." She heaved out the words like cement blocks.

The Director squinted his eyes, pursed his lips, inclined his head, gripped his lapels, and, looking very thoughtful and distant, said, "Yes. . . yes. . . Napoleon jacket. . . yes. . . yes. . . I'll see about that. . .

Thank you, Miss—er—ah—um. . . Ahem!"

"Yes-sir," she said, weak with strangling. She stood like a plaster cast, trembling inside a stiff outer shell, dizzying above the running salt suds, unable to move.

He cleared his throat again: "Ahem" Yes, Miss—er. . . " He walked away blunderingly, down the hall. A sudden nurse fluttered carressingly down upon him with her beautiful face and white flowering arms. He nodded toward her slowly with his ragged head. "Ah. . . Ahem! . . . Miss—er. . . ?" The deep stammering faded into distant thunder.

His presence drained from around her in roapy froths of sliding tide. She noticed the whisper of omnipresent air-conditioning, and felt the cool clasp of endless ivory walls. With lifted chin and lowered lids, she turned (primly pivoting above the gleaming tiles), and moved (floating lumpishly) toward a distant square of brilliant light, while (somewhere) a slender fish flipped over and over (flashing) on vast quick-drying sands.

Finally: she entered open air.

It was a beautiful day: the sky was deep blue with huge billowing clouds piled in high soft tiers. The wind skimmed and shivered in the heat along the vivid green grass. There were trees in the distance: the edge of the woods. And out of them, a brimming brook, in sparkles down a green hill, came gushing.

Away out on the lawn the thick round cafeteria basked in the bright sunlight: soaking in warmth, polished and squat, repleat, like a dozing toad, fat and slowly fuming, content, like a fresh-fed sow, sucked to slumbering by a tiny herd, sweetly to the tune of soft squeals and grunts.

Edna looked squintingly beneath her pink inverted palm, and thought: Eat! And struck out under the sun.

Arriving: She stepped smartly up shallow stone steps, puffed and pulled open a glass door.

She saw: white clouds of eating nurses.

She thought: eat! Oh eat!

Blurrily: she disappeared into the clattering cafeteria.

-Joe Stultz

SIGNORA VENETO'S GLOVE SHOP

Lucia Danieli hurried along the narrow, winding streets of the city. Her heels tapped rhythmically on the stone pavement, and her feet were beginning to ache. She heard the familiar sounds of her fellow citizens as they greeted the morning. All along the way shutters were open, and bleary-eyed Italians were stretching themselves on their narrow balconies overlooking the street. Even at this hour some were active enough to display their Italian temperaments in loud tones.

The distance to the Via Condotti seemed unusually far this morning, or perhaps it was the time that seemed too short. If only I had an auto, she thought, as she heard the noise of the early morning traffic. Almost everyone in Rome has a car except someone like me who works in a glove shop.

Her thoughts were interrupted by a complimentary whistle from the doorway of Giogio's pastry shop. Lucia was quite accustomed to such expressions of flattery, yet this morning it annoyed her. Somehow it was quite unfair for someone with her good-looks to be stuck behind the counter of a glove shop. Certainly there were more appealing ways to spend one's time.

She saw a billboard that advertised an Italian film. A voluptuous figure and equally attractive face revealed the identity of Simonetta Brioni, Italy's most popular cinema star. Lucia stopped. How many times had she compared her own face and figure to that now famous one in front of her! How often she had pictured herself, Lucia Danieli, in such a place of prominence. Reluctantly pulling herself away, she rushed on. Someday, she thought, I'll be in her place. No more glove shop and no more walking!

She heard the bells of the old church located at the top of the Spanish Steps. Only a few more blocks. . . . She paused at the top of the steps to catch her breath. Even in her anxious state she found this spot forever charming. On each side of the steps were flower venders. The blended hues on each side seemed to form an aisle for her descent. At the bottom she saw the delicately sculptured fountain pouring forth glistening drops of water into the sunlight. On the other side was the Via Condotti and Signora Veneto's glove shop.

She hurried down the graceful steps onto the Via Condotti. Tourists were already beginning to enter the exclusive shops, and she saw two looking in the window of Signora Veneto's shop. Lucia prepared herself for the stern gaze of her employer. She entered the shop and went behind the counter. To her surprise she did not see or hear Signora Veneto.

The shop was ornately decorated with antique gold furniture and a red rug. Numerous shelves displayed leather gloves of every color and description. On one wall were autographed pictures of celebrities who had visited and purchased gloves from Signora Veneto. These were neatly arranged in gold frames. Signora's shop was one of Rome's finest.

The two ladies who had been looking in the window entered. "Mildred, I simply must have those short, white gloves with the embroidery. They are so feminine."

"Well then, I guess I'll go ahead and buy a pair here," replied the other.

Lucia brought out the arm rest and began fitting the two ladies. She smiled slightly upon realizing that her late arrival had gone unnoticed, but she wondered where Signora Veneto could be.

"Let me try those black ones with the lace inset," asked one of the ladies. Lucia tried the glove on her hand, being very careful not to stretch the soft leather. She heard Signora's voice in the back of the shop. In a moment she came into the room.

Signora Veneto was a large woman with sharp features. Her black hair, which she wore in a bun, was pulled so tightly that it made her face seem stretched. She wore gray, her usual color. She motioned Lucia aside.

"Simonetta Brioni will be paying us a visit some time today. I received a call from her manager early this morning. I have been stitching a special pair of gloves for her. Please make certain that the shop is in perfect order."

Lucia looked at herself in the mirror. She had a rather provocative appearance; she was typically Italian with a dark complexion, black hair, and full features. Lucia recognized her beauty, and she was anxious to use it to advantage. She impatiently stroked one piece of hair that refused to stay in place. Thank goodness I took care with my make-up this

morning, she thought. Maybe someone of influence will be with Simonetta Brioni. She checked to make certain her seams were straight before returning to the front of the shop.

Lucia placed the box of size 7 gloves, Simonetta Brioni's size, where she could easily find it. What a life she must lead, one of leisure and luxury. How nice it would be to have her advantages and fame. Someday. . . thought Lucia. As she thumped a piece of lint from her dress, Simonetta Brioni entered the shop.

Lucia stared at her in disbelief. How tired and undesirable she looked! Under her eyes were dark circles which were not well hidden beneath her pasty make-up. Her finger tips were stained with the familiar yellow of tobacco. There was no aura of calm assurance which Lucia had so often visualized; her appearance seemed to desecrate Simonetta Brioni's image in Lucia's mind. Why, she looked almost absurd! Finally Lucia stammered, "May I help you, Signora Brioni?"

Lucia Danieli felt the cool morning breeze as she paused at the top of the Spanish Steps. She smiled and sniffed the bouquet of violets that she had just purchased. She was walking to Signora Veneto's glove shop, but this morning the distance seemed a bit shorter.

-Lois Rowe

A PROSE POEM

Look into the sky when it is a deep, polished blue,
When it is streaked with suspended white clouds that
 drift slowly along like wisps of smoke,
And when just beneath the clouds, silhouettes of birds
 flash in the sun and trace spirals in their flight.
There is a tense excitement hovering on the air—a strange
 aliveness quivering like plucked harp strings.

Whenever I look skyward at such times, for a moment, I,
 too, soar aloft with the birds, clouds, and sky.
The breeze runs its fingers through my hair and rushes
 into my eyes, but there are only the swirling bird
 shadows, drifting clouds, and the sky.
But then I breathe a heavy sigh and look downward
 again to where I stand.
Beneath both birds and clouds I stand here below.

-Jim Burson

AN EXPERIMENT IN LOVE

Marilyn and Jerry were sitting alone in the car in Marilyn's driveway. They were listening to the radio, or, rather, filling a vacuum in the conversation by pretending to listen to it.

This was The Night for Marilyn. She had planned this evening for weeks. She had decided their relationship was ripe and ready for something more serious. They had had four dates: four ordinary, thanks-for-a-good-time and one-good-night-kiss dates. Marilyn thought Jerry was one of the best-looking boys she had ever seen, and she was determined to get him.

She had planned her wardrobe for the evening with all the care of a general laying his strategy for a final battle. Her manicure was flawless, her hairdo was straight from the beauty shop, and she had spent an hour getting her makeup on just-so. Her perfume was "Intimate;" she wore her black velvet sheath with the V-shaped neck.

It was awkward, just sitting there. Jerry sniffed a few times unconcernedly. Marilyn cleared her throat and crossed and uncrossed her legs. Jerry drummed his fingertips on the steering wheel. Marilyn wished she could think of something to say—quick—something cute or funny or something deliciously naive—that always seemed to be effective for setting the mood. She could think of nothing, so she tried the next best thing—the psychological approach:

"Sometimes I wish I could understand you, Jerry," she said.

"Huh?" Jerry said, taken by surprise.

"I mean, that sometimes you look just like you're so far away from everything, and I wonder what's on your mind—"

"Oh, well, nothin'" he said, "uh—nothin' much." He cleared his throat and began humming off-key. His crewcut, in the shadows of the car, reminded Marilyn of a blond porcupine.

"Jerry," she tried again, "what are you going to do with your life?"

"Oh—I dunno," Jerry said as he shrugged and looked at her. "Why?"

"I'll bet no matter what you do you'll be a success." Marilyn hoped that didn't sound too gushy.

She saw she had pleased him when he hesitantly put his arm around her shoulders. Marilyn looked up at him and smiled sweetly.

So far, so good, Marilyn thought. She sighed luxuriously and eased her head against his shoulder, her eyelids blissfully closed and an angelic purity lighting her features. (She knew how she looked; she had practiced and observed the technique a thousand times before her mirror.

"You're so pretty—" Jerry said.

"Why, thank you, Jerry," she said—flattered and surprised.

Marilyn grew apprehensive when she recognized "Bolero" playing on the radio. She had changed stations during their ride home, from the usual rock'n roll to the more sophisticated night-time music. She wondered if "Bolero" plus her wiles might be more than was necessary or even desirable for the occasion. She wanted to be romantic, but not too romantic.

She discreetly applied more rigidity to her languid pose, made sure her skirt was pulled up just enough, and raised feline eyelids to inflict her "baby-doll" expression. Her eyes were wide and trusting—lips parted innocently—. (She was glad she had used her "Passionate Pink" lipstick; the shade was very becoming and it helped her lips stay soft.) She gazed at him in mindless contemplation, hoping the look would make him wonder what visions she must be dreaming.

Jerry cleared his throat. "What are you thinkin'?" he asked abruptly. His arm tightened around her shoulders. He had fallen in very neatly.

Marilyn began to remove nonexistent lint from the lapel of Jerry's sport coat, while at the same time feeling the texture of the material softly.

"Oh, I was just thinking how wonderful it would be to stay out here forever, just you and me; it's so dreamy." And she sighed. Her hand inched to his tie which she began slowly to loosen. Jerry swallowed nervously.

They remained silent for several minutes and listened to "Bolero" build up momentum until the undulating rhythm reached breathtaking proportions. Marilyn could feel Jerry's heart pounding madly through his coat; she was elated over her success.

She heard Jerry take a deep breath. He put his arm around her waist and pulled her closer. He kissed her at the climax of "Bolero."

It was such a delicious feeling, to be so desirable. Marilyn "sexily" slid her hands along his arms, wrapped her arms submissively around his neck, and relaxed. In the silence following their kiss and the abrupt cessation of the music, Marilyn whispered, with all the passion she could muster, "I love you. . . I love you, Jerry. . . ." She thought it sounded even better than when she had rehearsed it.

Jerry seized her and began to kiss her savagely on her mouth, her face, her neck. Marilyn was so startled she lost her balance and toppled over backwards on the seat. "Oh, Marilyn, Marilyn. . . ." Jerry moaned, still madly embracing and kissing her. Marilyn's feet sailed up in the air as she fell and one foot came down firmly on the car horn which blared with a horrible "b-e-e-e-e-p—" through the night.

"Stop, Jerry! Stop!!" Marilyn screamed, panicked.

Jerry sat up quickly, embarrassed, and helped Marilyn into an upright position.

"Marilyn, I'm sorry—" he said.

Marilyn regained her composure immediately, and knew she must act quickly to soothe over the incident.

"Really, Jerry, you didn't know how ticklish I am—" as she daintily ungrapped his arms from about her and smoothed her somewhat ruffled hairdo. She was careful to laugh as she said it.

"I tickled you?" Jerry asked blankly.

"You know you did, you devil!" she said. "Tickle me again like that and I'll hop right out of the car! How'd you know I was so ticklish, anyway!"

"Uh—well. . .," and he laughed, "gosh, I just guessed, I s'pose."

"I'll bet you guessed! I'll bet you knew all along—you probably even planned it!" She made a move as if to tickle him back. He quickly put his arms over his ribs and grabbed her hands. They both laughed.

Marilyn was thankful for her naiveté—it had turned the trick for her. Her romantic spell was broken, but the music was over and her lipstick was smeared. She persuaded Jerry that it was time to leave, and they walked to the door together.

"I'll never forget tonight, Jerry," Marilyn whispered at the door as she took Jerry's hands in hers and gazed at him adoringly.

"Marilyn, would you like to go steady with me? I like you an awful lot—"

"Why, Jerry! I'd love to!" she exclaimed, her eyes sparkling and her expression appearing very surprised. He was hers! She wondered if it was the lipstick, the perfume, of her "I love you" that had done it.

Jerry was overwhelmed. He pulled her to him and squeezed her so tightly she couldn't breathe.

"I'll wear your senior ring forever," she murmured, a little breathlessly.

"Oh, yes, my ring—" Jerry remembered, taking it off and giving it to her.

"And here's mine," she reciprocated.

Jerry felt practically married after this. He was no longer hesitant to kiss Marilyn again.

"I'll call tomorrow," Jerry promised.

"Hope I can wait 'til then," she answered, opening the door.

"Good night—darling," Jerry whispered as she turned to go inside. His fingertips clung to hers until she was in the house.

"Nitey-night," said Marilyn, closing the door seductively.

"The most fabulous night of my whole life!" Marilyn thought triumphantly. "He's crazy about me!"

She sat at her mirror and smiled enchantingly at herself. She picked up another mirror and regarded her profile, tossing her head back to see the effect. She said, "I love you . . . I love you. . ." to her image, and got a little shiver of excitement remembering the effect these words had caused a few moments before.

She re-enacted the scene where she pretended Jerry had tickled her, and she scrutinized herself as she mouthed, "How'd you know I was so ticklish, anyway?" She was pleased with the way she had handled that situation and laughed lightly to herself. Her laugh caught her interest so she sat for some time practicing various types of laughs and observing her expressions from different angles.

When she went to bed she closed her eyes and saw only images of herself laughing, talking, and romancing. She pictured herself as she might appear on a movie screen to an adoring audience; she saw herself modeling Dior's and Balenciaga's for breathless multitudes.

As she rolled over and began to drift into sleep she smiled to herself and mumbled, "Oh, Marilyn, Marilyn. . . ummm-m-m-m; everybody loves you"

-Lynn Taylor

THE TIME OF THE TROLL

Icarus Burroughs was convinced that a troll lived upstairs in his grandfather's house. Every afternoon, when his grandmother drove her big, blue Chrysler to town to pick up his grandfather at the office, Icarus pushed a big chair across the foot of the stairs and turned the radio on. When he heard the crunch of the Chrysler's tires on the gravel of the driveway, he would jump up and push the chair away, opening the stairs to the passage of people. . . and trolls.

It was a sticky, hot summer, uncomfortable as only Louisiana summers can be. The heat of the day was almost touchable. Walking in the dust of the chicken yard, kicking up ankle-high puffs of red powder with every step, Icarus could feel the sun's rays like a paddle on his skinny shoulders and crew-cut head. Even rain was oppressive. It seemed to drive the heat into the house with the people, where it simmered and steamed until Icarus felt red as a lobster. Nights were sticky and black as molasses, and Icarus felt that every warm wind was the breath of the frogs in the nearby marshy swamp. He woke every morning with his seer-sucker pajamas stuck to his back.

There was a tremendous oak tree outside the fence that ran between the front yard and the road, and its long, bowing branches almost touched the ground inside the fence. Early in the summer, Icarus perfected a sort of running leap into its lower branches, from which he could quickly climb high up into the tree. If he missed his hand-hold in the leap, he invariably ran, propelled by his forward speed, into the fence, and that hurt. Usually, however, he found it a simple task to get into the tree. Once there, he would scamper among its branches until he sat, swaying, in the limbs, king of the oak.

About once a week a library bus would come by the house and stop, and Icarus would run out to it and feverishly go through its shelves until he found three or four books to read. And he would lead a new triple life for a week. He would be Robin Hood, stalking the King's deer, or his sheriff; or he would be Geronimo, slit-eyes and savage, prowling on the mesa of the top of the carshed; or he would be (and this he liked best) Mowgli, the little frog, hanging from a tree branch, brandishing the tail of the red-dog in the face of the vicious pack. Sometimes, in the excitement of this solitary and perfect game, fear would strike him. Fear of the imaginary red-dogs that leaped and howled and

snarled and growled beneath him. When this happened, he would turn and flee to the tree-top fastness, and squat, bony and bare-backed, among the riffling leaves, until the fear was past and the game was just a game again.

On Thursdays he spent the day downtown, starting with a morning at the YMCA and a hamburger at Walgreen's, and ending with a movie, the ritual buying of a few comic books, and a ride home in the big, blue Chrysler.

At the YMCA, he ran shuttle-races with other boys (whose names he never learned), screaming with excitement as his team led, or with concern as they fell behind. After the races, he would join the lines of tumblers as they turned somersaults or cartwheels. It melted in his mind until it became a circus, and the screaming, noisy boys were his audience. The mats narrowed as he approached them, until they were a single strand of tight-rope, a hundred feet up in the multi-colored tent of his mind, and he performed feats of legendary daring with no net below. He never fell.

When the gym period was over, the boys raced to the locker room to don bathing suits for an hour in the indoor pool. They wet their hair in the shower, waded through a disinfectant foot-bath, and lined up by the inviting tile pool. At a signal from the instructor, they all dived into the water and swam across the pool twice. Icarus was always one of the first to finish.

The swimming hour done, Icarus, his eyes making rainbows around the lights in the locker room, would dress and hurry to the drug-store on the corner. There he would always eat a hamburger and drink a lemonade before running to the movies. The dark of the theater was cool and comfortable after the radiated heat of the city streets. Icarus would sit and watch the flower-shirted cowboys race their palominos madly along the trails of purple sage, or the leering monsters from Mars plot to conquer Earth, and he would crunch popcorn between gulps of sticky orange soda-pop.

The theater lights came on shortly after the heroes had banished the Mars-men or the good guys had gunned down the bad ones, and Icarus went, blinking, into the late-afternoon sun. He went directly to the news-stand, and picked out several comic books. These were his studies for the summer. Then he met his grandfather outside of his office, and rode home with him in the Chrysler when his grandmother came for them.

It was after one of these Thursdays that he found a new world. He had bought a comic book with a bright picture of men in armor on its cover, and found it to be an old, old story called The Iliad. He read it over and over, until the strange, melodious names came to his lips naturally—Agamemnon, Menelaus, Achilles, Hector, Priam, Helen, Paris: and he added a new game to his days. Only he rewrote the ending. When sullen, moody Achilles came to fight Hector, it was Paris who came from Troy, and Achilles killed him. Then Hector, majestic in silver armor, strode from the city to fight Achilles. For hours they fought, until Hector dodged under Achilles' guard and struck the Greek a blow on the heel with his short sword. Achilles fell dead. In terror, the Greeks fled, leaving Troy with a wooden horse, which Hector wisely burned, men and all. Icarus felt a good deal better about his ending than he did about the original.

Once in a while, his parents would call, and he would have to talk to them. It embarrassed him to be called "baby" and "honey"; although he liked his parents a lot, he thought they were pretty dumb about some things. They always sounded as if they expected him to be unhappy, and he was sure they were disappointed when he wasn't. They often asked him if he had any playmates, and he always told them that he had. That made them happy; he didn't think he had to tell them who his playmates were, since he was sure they wouldn't understand about Little John and Cochise, and Akela and Balloo.

On the nights when it rained, his grandfather would sit, fat and unbuttoned, and tell him the stories of his own youth in North Louisiana. They were rambling and funny and exciting stories, and they were punctuated by "He was a Henke on his mother's side," or "He was a first cousin to old Will Fairchild." The best stories were about a wild, red-haired boy named Bud Tull. Tull was an orphan who lived with his uncle, Corley Walsh (an ex-Pony Express rider). Bud was always in trouble—stealing watermelons, arranging rooster-fights, fighting at school, or hopping freight trains to go to Shreveport, or even as far away as Monroe. On these story-telling nights, grandmother would make hot chocolate, even though it was still hot in the house, because she said, "hot inside drives off the hot outside." And then Icarus would be sent off to bed.

Sunday afternoons, Icarus would put on his pajamas and lie in front of the radio and listen to his favorite programs until

supper time. They were almost all detective programs. He could shut his eyes and visualize the square-jawed, flinty-eyed detectives as they tracked down the ruthless arch-criminals. Every Sunday he re-affirmed his decision to become a Private Detective when he grew up. He would put on his trenchcoat and slouch hat and break the back of the dreaded syndicate.

Always, he remembered the troll upstairs, and looked for him through the windows, from the outside, to try to spot him. He never did. It occurred to him that the troll must studiously avoid windows. Finally, near the end of the summer, he decided to face the troll and fight him.

One day, when his grandmother had left to go pick up his grandfather, Icarus went straight to the kitchen and took out the wickedest-looking butcher knife in the knife drawer. He walked back to the foot of the stairs and looked up them. OK, troll, he thought, I'm coming up. He went up the first four or five steps boldly. A board creaked upstairs and he suddenly flattened himself against the wall. He stood there, his heart beating so hard he knew the troll could hear it, and then he began to sidle up the rest of the stairs. He held the butcher knife in his forward hand, so tight that his knuckles were a yellowish white. At the head of the stairs was the open bathroom door. He could see that the troll wasn't in there. He paused dramatically, bunched his legs under him, and sprang into the bathroom. Inside, he turned to face the open door, and let out a deep breath. Sweat was rolling down his sides and face; he wiped it from his eyes with the back of his hand. He hefted the knife in his other hand, and stepped gingerly into the hall. It was empty.

There was one big bedroom to his left, and two smaller, one-closet bedrooms to his right. He picked the big one first. The door to it was open, and he could see a red chair and the foot of a bed, and two closed closet doors. He crept into the room and looked around. No troll. He looked under the bed. Nope. In the closets, then. He opened one and jumped back, knife ready—but it was empty, except for several dresses and a black coat in a plastic bag. He left the door open and moved to the second closet. It was totally empty, except for a Christmas-tree stand and some assorted decorations in a cardboard box. Icarus prodded the box with his knife, and turned to the hall again.

He walked on tip-toe down the hall to the two smaller bedrooms. Both were open. He looked into one of them. It had a bed and a dresser in it, and a brass hat-rack. Its closet door was ajar. He looked under the bed and saw no troll. He gently shoved the door open with his foot, and found only some winter clothes of his grandfather's, and an odor of moth-balls. That left only the other room. He went to the door and peered suspiciously into it. It was empty. There was no bed in it, nor a chair. It had three windows, and a warm breeze made the white organdy curtains dance like three ghosts. He could not see the closet from the hall. The closet in which the troll must be hiding, waiting for combat with the foolish mortal who would challenge him. Icarus considered flight and then, made brave by his butcher knife, stepped into the room. As he had expected, it was empty, and the closet door was closed.

"Come out!" he said. His voice sounded loud and shrill to him, so he lowered it and tried to sound like a Sunday afternoon detective. "Come out!" he repeated. He wished for the help of Hector or Little John. The door stayed shut.

He reached for the knob, and turned it slowly, almost silently. Crouching, knife held in front of him, he threw it open, coming face to face with— - himself, in a full-length mirror. He blinked, then straightened up and looked at himself, in his khaki shorts and white T-shirt, with the butcher knife dangling awkwardly from his hand. He felt suddenly very foolish. He closed the closet door and went out of the room and downstairs. He put the knife in the kitchen drawer and went into the living-room. He lay down on the rug and picked up a comic book and looked at it. Then he put it down and went back upstairs and into the biggest room. He sat in the window-sill and watched for the big blue Chrysler, and watched the wind ruffle the leaves of the big oak tree.

-Herb Fackler

Some say that Infinity is paramount
At least I think so. Don't you?
That's higher than men can count,
But don't worry. . . some of us will come through.

-Anonymous

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